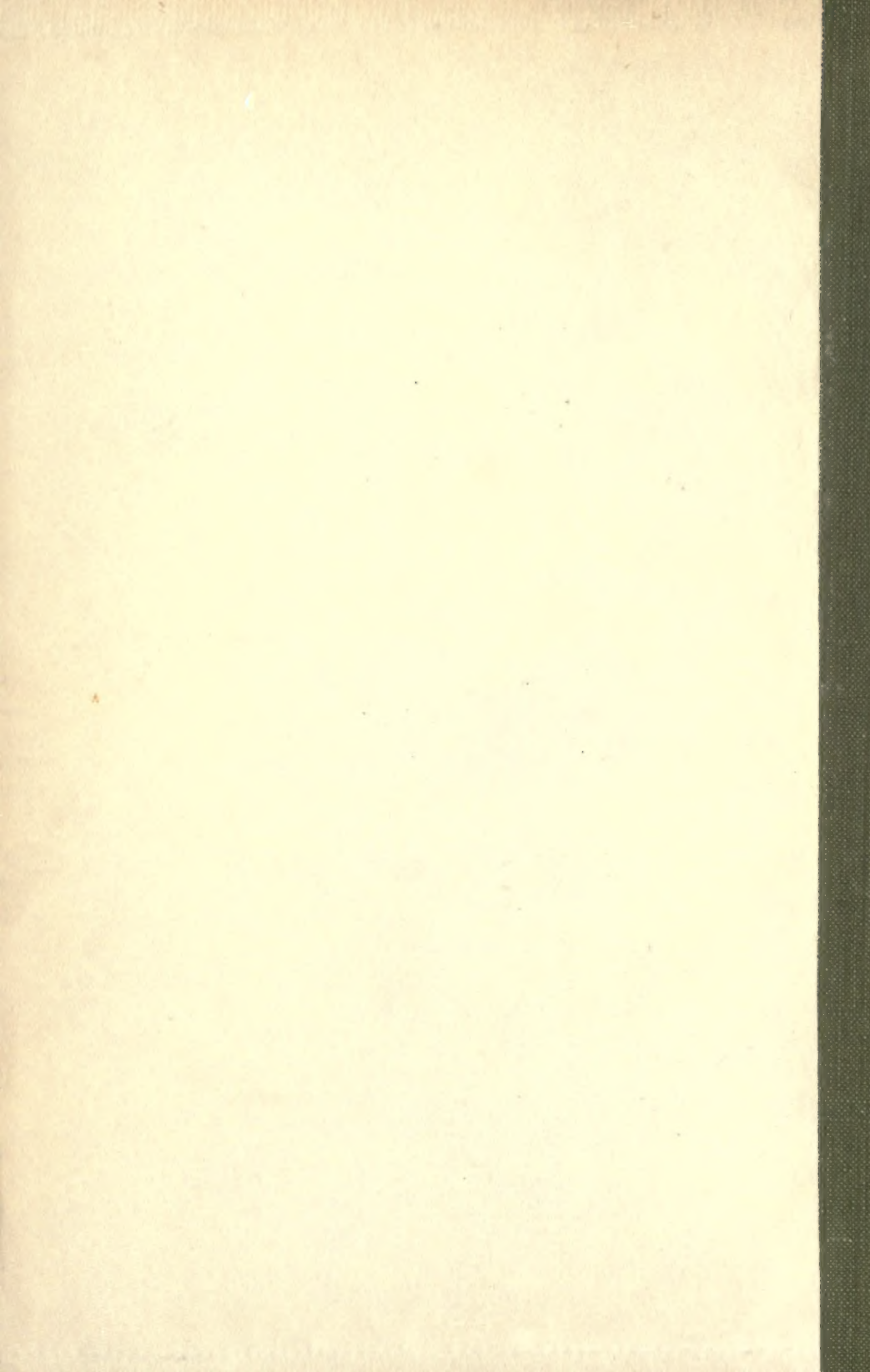


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*THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND  
NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT: NOW  
FIRST COMPLETELY DONE INTO ENGLISH  
PROSE AND VERSE, FROM THE ORIGINAL  
ARABIC, BY JOHN PAYNE (AUTHOR  
OF "THE MASQUE OF SHADOWS," "IN-  
TAGLIOS," "SONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH,"  
"LAUTREC," "THE POEMS OF MASTER  
FRANCIS VILLON OF PARIS," "NEW  
POEMS," ETC. ETC.). IN NINE VOLUMES:  
VOLUME THE THIRD.*

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## **THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS AND ONE NIGHT.**

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When Shehrzad had made an end of the history of King Omar ben Ennuman and his sons, Shehriyar said to her, "I desire that thou tell me some story about birds;" and Dunyazad, hearing this, said to her sister, "All this while I have never seen the Sultan light at heart till this night; and this gives me hope that the issue may be a happy one for thee with him." Then drowsiness overcame the Sultan; so he slept and Shehrzad, perceiving the approach of day, was silent.

When it was the hundred and forty-sixth night, Shehrzad **Night** began as follows: "I have heard tell, O august King, that **xlvi.**

### **STORY OF THE BIRDS AND BEASTS AND THE SON OF ADAM.**

A peacock once abode with his mate on the sea-shore, in a place that abounded in trees and streams, but was infested with lions and all manner other wild beasts, and for fear of these latter, the two birds were wont to roost by night upon a tree, going forth by day in quest of food. They abode thus awhile, till, their fear increasing on them, they cast about for some other place wherein to dwell, and in the course of their search, they happened on an island abounding in trees and streams. So they alighted there and ate of its fruits and drank of its waters. Whilst they were thus engaged, up came a duck, in a state of great affright, and stayed not till she reached the tree on which the two peacocks were perched, when she seemed reassured. The peacock doubted not but that she had some

rare story; so he asked her of her case and the cause of her alarm, to which she replied, 'I am sick for sorrow and my fear of the son of Adam: beware, O beware of the sons of Adam!' 'Fear not,' rejoined the peacock, 'now that thou hast won to us.' 'Praised be God,' cried the duck, 'who hath done away my trouble and my concern with your neighbourhood! For indeed I come, desiring your friendship.' Thereupon the peahen came down to her and said, 'Welcome and fair welcome! No harm shall befall thee; how can the son of Adam come at us and we in this island midmost the sea? From the land he cannot win to us, neither can he come up to us out of the sea. So be of good cheer and tell us what hath betided thee from him.' 'Know then, O peahen,' answered the duck, 'that I have dwelt all my life in this island in peace and safety and have seen no disquieting thing, till one night, as I was asleep, I saw in a dream the semblance of a son of Adam, who talked with me and I with him. Then I heard one say to me, "O duck, beware of the son of Adam and be not beguiled by his words nor by that he may suggest to thee; for he aboundeth in wiles and deceit; so beware with all wariness of his perfidy, for he is crafty and guileful, even as saith of him the poet:

He giveth thee honeyed words with the tip of his tongue, galore; But  
sure he will cozen thee, as the fox doth, evermore.

For know that the son of Adam beguileth the fish and draweth them forth of the waters and shooteth the birds with a pellet of clay and entrappeth the elephant with his craft. None is safe from his mischief, and neither beast nor bird escapeth him. Thus have I told thee what I have heard concerning the son of Adam." I awoke, fearful and trembling (continued the duck), and from that time to this my heart hath not known gladness, for fear of the son of Adam, lest he take me unawares by his craft or trap me in his snares. By the time the end of the day

overtook me, I was grown weak and my strength and courage failed me ; so, desiring to eat and drink, I went forth, troubled in spirit and with a heart ill at ease. I walked on, till I reached yonder mountain, where I saw a tawny lion-whelp at the door of a cave. When he saw me, he rejoiced greatly in me, for my colour pleased him and my elegant shape : so he cried out to me, saying, "Draw nigh unto me." So I went up to him and he said to me, "What is thy name and thy kind?" Quoth I, "My name is 'duck,' and I am of the bird-kind ; but thou, why tarriest thou in this place till now?" "My father the lion," answered he, "has bidden me many a day beware of the son of Adam, and it befell this night that I saw in my sleep the semblance of a son of Adam." And he went on to tell me the like of that I have told you. When I heard this, I said to him, "O lion, I resort to thee, that thou mayst kill the son of Adam and steadfastly address thy thought to his slaughter ; for I am greatly in fear for myself of him, and fear is added to my fear, for that thou also fearest the son of Adam, and thou the Sultan of the beasts." Then, O my sister, I ceased not to bid him beware of the son of Adam and urge him to slay him, till he rose of a sudden from his stead and went out, lashing his flanks with his tail. He fared on, and I after him, till we came to a place, where several roads met, and saw a cloud of dust arise, which, presently clearing away, discovered a naked runaway ass, now running and galloping and now rolling in the dust. When the lion saw the ass, he cried out to him, and he came up to him submissively. Then said the lion, "Harkye, crack-brain ! What is thy kind and what brings thee hither?" "O son of the Sultan," answered the ass, "I am by kind an ass, and the cause of my coming hither is that I am fleeing from the son of Adam." "Dost thou fear then that he will kill thee?" asked the lion-whelp. "Not so, O son of the Sultan," replied

the ass; "but I fear lest he put a cheat on me; for he hath a thing called the pad, that he sets on my back, and a thing called the girth, that he binds about my belly, and a thing called the crupper, that he puts under my tail, and a thing called the bit, that he places in my mouth; and he fashions me a goad and goads me with it and makes me run more than my strength. If I stumble, he curses me, and if I bray, he reviles me; and when I grow old and can no longer run, he puts a wooden pannel on me and delivers me to the water-carriers, who load my back with water from the river, in skins and other vessels, such as jars, and I wear out my life in misery and abasement and fatigue till I die, when they cast me on the rubbish-heaps to the dogs. So what misery can surpass this, and what calamities can be greater than these?" When, O peahen, I heard the ass's words, my skin shuddered at the son of Adam and I said to the lion-whelp, "Of a verity, O my lord, the ass hath excuse, and his words add terror to my terror." Then said the lion to the ass, "Whither goest thou?" "Before the rising of the sun," answered he, "I espied the son of Adam afar off and fled from him, and now I am minded to flee forth and run without ceasing, for the greatness of my fear of him, so haply I may find a place to shelter me from the perfidious son of Adam." Whilst he was thus discoursing, seeking the while to take leave of us and go away, behold, another cloud of dust arose, at sight of which the ass brayed and cried out and let fly a great crack of wind. Presently, the dust lifted and discovered a handsome black horse of elegant shape, with white feet and fine legs and a brow-star like a dirhem, which made towards us, neighing, and stayed not till he stood before the whelp, the son of the lion, who, when he saw him, marvelled at his beauty and said to him, "What is thy kind, O noble wild beast, and wherefore fleest thou into this vast and wide desert?" "O lord



of the beasts," answered he, "I am of the horse-kind, and I am fleeing from the son of Adam." The whelp wondered at the horse's words and said to him, "Say not thus; for it is shame for thee, seeing that thou art tall and stout. How comes it that thou fearest the son of Adam, thou, with thy bulk of body and thy swiftness of running, when I, for all my littleness of body, am resolved to find out the son of Adam, and rushing on him, eat his flesh, that I may allay the affright of this poor duck and make her to dwell in peace in her own place? But now thou hast wrung my heart with thy talk and turned me back from what I had resolved to do, in that, for all thy bulk, the son of Adam hath mastered thee and feared neither thy height nor thy breadth, though, wert thou to kick him with thy foot, thou wouldst kill him, nor could he prevail against thee, but thou wouldst make him drink the cup of death." The horse laughed, when he heard the whelp's words, and replied, "Far, far is it from my power to overcome him, O king's son! Let not my length and my breadth nor yet my bulk delude thee, with respect to the son of Adam; for he, of the excess of his guile and his cunning, fashions for me a thing called a hobble and hobbles my four legs with ropes of palm-fibres, bound with felt, and makes me fast by the head to a high picket, so that I remain standing and can neither sit nor lie down, being tied up. When he hath a mind to ride me, he binds on his feet a thing of iron called a stirrup and lays on my back another thing called a saddle, which he fastens by two girths, passed under my armpits. Then he sets in my mouth a thing of iron he calls a bit, to which he ties a thing of leather called a rein; and when he mounts on the saddle on my back, he takes the rein in his hand and guides me with it, goading my flanks the while with the stirrups,<sup>1</sup> till he makes

<sup>1</sup> It need hardly be remarked that Eastern stirrups are made so as to do duty as spurs.

them bleed : so do not ask, O king's son, what I endure from the son of Adam. When I grow old and lean and can no longer run swiftly, he sells me to the miller, who makes me turn in the mill, and I cease not from turning night and day, till I grow decrepit. Then he in turn sells me to the knacker, who slaughters me and flays off my hide, after which he plucks out my tail, which he sells to the sieve-makers, and melts down my fat for tallow." At this, the young lion's anger and vexation redoubled, and he said to the horse, "When didst thou leave the son of Adam?" "At mid-day," replied the horse; "and he is now on my track." Whilst the whelp was thus conversing with the horse, there arose a cloud of dust and presently subsiding, discovered a furious camel, which made toward us, braying and pawing the earth with his feet. When the whelp saw how great and lusty he was, he took him to be the son of Adam and was about to spring at him, when I said to him, "O king's son, this is not the son of Adam, but a camel, and meseems he is fleeing from the son of Adam." As I spoke, O my sister, the camel came up and saluted the lion-whelp, who returned his greeting and said to him, "What brings thee hither?" Quoth he, "I am fleeing from the son of Adam." "And thou," said the whelp, "with thy huge frame and length and breadth, how comes it that thou fearest the son of Adam, seeing that one kick of thy foot would kill him?" "O son of the Sultan," answered the camel, "know that the son of Adam has wiles, which none can withstand, nor can any but Death prevail against him; for he puts in my nostrils a twine of goat's-hair he calls a nose-ring and over my head a thing he calls a halter; then he delivers me to the least of his children, and the youngling draws me along by the nose-ring, for all my size and strength. Then they load me with the heaviest of burdens and go long journeys with me and put me to hard labours all hours of the day and

night. When I grow old and feeble, my master keeps me not with him, but sells me to the knacker, who slaughters me and sells my hide to the tanners and my flesh to the cooks : so do not ask what I suffer from the son of Adam." "When didst thou leave the son of Adam?" asked the young lion. "At sundown," replied the camel; "and I doubt not but that, having missed me, he is now in search of me : wherefore, O son of the Sultan, let me go, that I may flee into the deserts and the wilds." "Wait awhile, O camel," said the whelp, "till thou see how I will rend him in pieces and give thee to eat of his flesh, whilst I crunch his bones and drink his blood." "O king's son," rejoined the camel, "I fear for thee from the son of Adam, for he is wily and perfidious." And he repeated the following verse :

Whenas on any land the oppressor doth alight, There's nothing left for those, that dwell therein, but flight.

Whilst the camel was speaking, there arose a cloud of dust, which opened and showed a short thin old man, with a basket of carpenters' tools on his shoulder and a branch of a tree and eight planks on his head. He had little children in his hand, and came on at a brisk pace, till he drew near us. When I saw him, O my sister, I fell down for excess of affright ; but the young lion rose and went to meet the carpenter, who smiled in his face and said to him, with a glib tongue, "O illustrious king and lord of the long arm, may God prosper thine evening and thine endeavour and increase thy valour and strengthen thee ! Protect me from that which hath betided me and smitten me with its mischief, for I have found no helper save only thee." And he stood before him, weeping and groaning and lamenting. When the whelp heard his weeping and wailing, he said, "I will succour thee from that thou fearest. Who hath done thee wrong and what art thou, O wild beast, whose like I never saw in my life nor saw



I ever one goodlier of form or more eloquent of tongue than thou? What is thy case?" "O lord of the beasts," answered the man, "I am a carpenter; he who hath wronged me is a son of Adam, and by break of dawn he will be with thee in this place." When the lion heard this, the light in his face was changed to darkness and he roared and snorted and his eyes cast forth sparks. Then he said, "By Allah, I will watch this night till the dawn, nor will I return to my father till I have compassed my intent. But thou," continued he, addressing the carpenter, "I see thou art short of step, and I would not wound thy feelings, for that I am generous of heart; yet do I deem thee unable to keep pace with the wild beasts: tell me then whither thou goest." "Know," answered the carpenter, "that I am on my way to thy father's Vizier, the Lynx; for when he heard that the son of Adam had set foot in this country, he feared greatly for himself and sent one of the beasts for me, to make him a house, wherein he should dwell, that it might shelter him and hold his enemy from him, so not one of the sons of Adam should come at him." When the young lion heard this, he envied the lynx and said to the carpenter, "By my life, thou must make me a house with these planks, ere thou make one for the lynx! When thou hast done my work, go to the lynx and make him what he wishes." "O lord of the beasts," answered the carpenter, "I cannot make thee aught, till I have made the lynx what he desires: then will I return to thy service and make thee a house, to ward thee from thine enemy." "By Allah," exclaimed the whelp, "I will not let thee go hence, till thou make me a house of these planks!" So saying, he sprang upon the carpenter, thinking to jest with him, and gave him a cuff with his paw. The blow knocked the basket off the man's shoulder and he fell down in a swoon, whereupon the young lion laughed at him and said, "Out on thee, O

carpenter! Of a truth thou art weak and hast no strength; so it is excusable in thee to fear the son of Adam." Now the carpenter was exceeding wroth; but he dissembled his anger, for fear of the whelp, and sat up and smiled in his face, saying, "Well, I will make thee the house." With this, he took the planks, and nailing them together, made a house in the form of a chest, after the measure of the young lion. In this he cut a large opening, to which he made a stout cover and bored many holes therein, leaving the door open. Then he took out some nails of wrought iron and a hammer and said to the young lion, "Enter this opening, that I may fit it to thy measure." The whelp was glad and went up to the opening, but saw that it was strait; and the carpenter said to him, "Crouch down and so enter." So the whelp crouched down and entered the chest, but his tail remained outside. Then he would have drawn back and come out; but the carpenter said to him, "Wait till I see if there be room for thy tail with thee." So saying, he twisted up the young lion's tail, and stuffing it into the chest, whipped the lid on to the opening and nailed it down; whereat the whelp cried out and said, "O carpenter, what is this narrow house thou hast made me? Let me out." But the carpenter laughed and answered, "God forbid! Repentance avails nothing for what is passed, and indeed thou shalt not come out of this place. Verily thou art fallen into the trap and there is no escape for thee from duress, O vilest of wild beasts!" "O my brother," rejoined the whelp, "what manner of words are these?" "Know, O dog of the desert," answered the man, "that thou hast fallen into that which thou fearedst; Fate hath overthrown thee, nor did thought-taking profit thee." When the whelp heard these words, he knew that this was indeed the very son of Adam, against whom he had been warned by his father on wake and by the mysterious voice in sleep; and I also, O my sister, was



certified that this was indeed he without doubt ; wherefore there took me great fear of him for myself and I withdrew a little apart and waited to see what he would do with the young lion. Then I saw the son of Adam dig a pit hard by the chest and throwing the latter therein, heap brushwood upon it and burn the young lion with fire. At this sight, my fear of the son of Adam redoubled, and in my affright I have been these two days fleeing from him.'

**Night** When the peahen heard the duck's story, she wondered  
**cxlvii.** exceedingly and said to her, 'O my sister, thou art safe here from the son of Adam, for we are in one of the islands of the sea, whither there is no way for him ; so do thou take up thine abode with us, till God make easy thine and our affair.' Quoth the duck, 'I fear lest some calamity come upon me by night, for no runaway can rid him of fate.' 'Abide with us,' rejoined the peahen, 'and be even as we ;' and ceased not to persuade her, till she yielded, saying, 'O my sister, thou knowest how little is my fortitude : had I not seen thee here, I had not remained.' 'That which is written on our foreheads,' said the peahen, 'we must indeed fulfil, and when our appointed day draws near, who shall deliver us ? But not a soul passes away except it have accomplished its predestined term and fortune.' As they talked, a cloud of dust appeared, at sight of which the duck shrieked aloud and ran down into the sea, crying out, 'Beware, beware, albeit there is no fleeing from Fate and Fortune !' After awhile, the dust subsided and discovered an antelope ; whereat the duck and the peahen were reassured and the latter said to her companion, 'O my sister, this thou seest and wouldst have me beware of is an antelope, and he is making for us. He will do us no hurt, for the antelope feeds upon the herbs of the earth, and even as thou art of the bird-kind, so is he of the beast-kind. So be of good cheer and leave care-taking ; for care-taking wasteth

the body.' Hardly had the peahen done speaking, when the antelope came up to them, thinking to shelter under the shade of the tree, and seeing the two birds, saluted them and said, 'I came to this island to-day, and I have seen none richer in herbage nor more pleasant of habitation.' Then he besought them of company and amity, and they, seeing his friendly behaviour to them, welcomed him and gladly accepted his offer. So they swore friendship one to another and abode in the island in peace and safety, eating and drinking and sleeping in common, till one day there came thither a ship, that had strayed from its course in the sea. It cast anchor near them, and the crew landing, dispersed about the island. They soon caught sight of the three animals and made for them, whereupon the peahen flew up into the tree and the antelope fled into the desert, but the duck abode paralysed (by fear). So they chased her, till they caught her and carried her with them to the ship, whilst she cried out and said, 'Caution availed me nothing against Fate and destiny!' When the peahen saw what had betided the duck, she came down from the tree, saying, 'I see that misfortunes lie in wait for all. But for yonder ship, parting had not befallen between me and this duck, for she was one of the best of friends.' Then she flew off and rejoined the antelope, who saluted her and gave her joy of her safety and enquired for the duck, to which she replied, 'The enemy hath taken her, and I loathe the sojourn of this island after her.' Then she wept for the loss of the duck and repeated the following verses :

The day of severance broke my heart in tway. God do the like unto  
the severance-day !

And also these :

I pray that we may yet foregather once again, That I may tell her all  
that parting wrought of pain.

The antelope was greatly moved at hearing of their comrade's fate, but dissuaded the peahen from her resolve to leave the island. So they abode there together, eating and drinking in peace and safety, save that they ceased not to mourn for the loss of the duck, and the antelope said to the peahen, 'Thou seest, O my sister, how the folk who came forth of the ship were the means of our severance from the duck and of her destruction; so do thou beware of them and guard thyself from them and from the craft of the son of Adam and his perfidy.' But the peahen replied, 'I am assured that nought caused her death but her neglect to celebrate the praises of God, and indeed I said to her, "Verily I fear for thee, because thou art not careful to praise God; for all things that He hath made do glorify Him, and if any neglect to do so, it leadeth to their destruction."' When the antelope heard the peahen's words, he exclaimed, 'May God make fair thy face!' and betook himself to the celebration of the praises of the Almighty, never after slackening therefrom. And it is said that his form of adoration was as follows: 'Glory be to the Requiter of good and evil, the Lord of glory and dominion!'

### THE HERMITS.

There was once a hermit, who served God on a certain mountain, whither resorted a pair of pigeons; and he was wont to make two parts of his daily bread, eating one half himself and giving the other to the pigeons. He prayed also for them, that they might be blest with increase; so they increased and multiplied greatly. Now they resorted only to that mountain, and the reason of their foregathering with the holy man was their assiduity in celebrating the praises of God; for it is said that the pigeons' formula of praise is, 'Glory be to the Creator of all things, Who appointeth to every one his daily bread,

Who builded the heavens and spread out the earth like a carpet !' They dwelt thus together, in the happiest of life, they and their brood, till the holy man died, when the company of the pigeons was broken up, and they all dispersed among the towns and villages and mountains.

Now in a certain other mountain there dwelt a shepherd, a man of piety and chastity and understanding ; and he had flocks of sheep, which he tended, and made his living by their milk and wool. The mountain aforesaid abounded in trees and pasturage and wild beasts, but the latter had no power over the peasant nor over his flocks ; so he continued to dwell therein, in security, taking no thought to the things of the world, by reason of his happiness and assiduity in prayer and devotion, till God ordained that he should fall exceeding sick. So he betook himself to a cavern in the mountain, and his sheep used to go out in the morning to the pasturage and take refuge at night in the cave. Now God was minded to try him and prove his obedience and constancy ; so He sent him one of His angels, who came in to him in the semblance of a fair woman and sat down before him. When the shepherd saw the woman seated before him, his flesh shuddered with horror of her and he said to her, 'O woman, what brings thee hither ? I have no need of thee, nor is there aught betwixt thee and me that calls for thy coming in to me.' 'O man,' answered she, 'dost thou not note my beauty and grace and the fragrance of my breath and knowest thou not the need women have of men and men of women ? Behold, I have chosen to be near thee and desire to enjoy thy company ; so who shall forbid thee from me ? Indeed, I come to thee willingly and do not withhold myself from thee : there is none with us whom we need fear ; and I wish to abide with thee as long as thou sojournest in this mountain and be thy companion. I offer myself to thee, for thou needest the service of



women; and if thou know me, thy sickness will leave thee and health return to thee and thou wilt repent thee of having forsworn the company of women during thy past life. Indeed, I give thee good advice: so give ear to my counsel and draw near unto me.' Quoth he, 'Go out from me, O deceitful and perfidious woman! I will not incline to thee nor approach thee. I want not thy company; he who coveteth thee renounceth the future life, and he who coveteth the future life renounceth thee, for thou seducest the first and the last. God the Most High lieth in wait for His servants and woe unto him who is afflicted with thy company!' 'O thou that errest from the truth and wanderest from the path of reason,' answered she, 'turn thy face to me and look upon my charms and profit by my nearness, as did the wise who have gone before thee. Indeed, they were richer than thou in experience and greater of wit; yet they rejected not the society of women, as thou dost, but took their pleasure of them and their company, and it did them no hurt, in body or in soul. Wherefore do thou turn from thy resolve and thou shalt praise the issue of thine affair.' 'All thou sayest I deny and abhor,' rejoined the shepherd, 'and reject all thou offerest; for thou art cunning and perfidious and there is no faith in thee, neither honour. How much foulness dost thou hide under thy beauty and how many a pious man hast thou seduced, whose end was repentance and perdition! Avaunt from me, O thou who devotest thyself to corrupt others!' So saying, he threw his goat's-hair cloak over his eyes, that he might not see her face, and betook himself to calling upon the name of his Lord. When the angel saw the excellence of his obedience (to God), he went out from him and ascended to heaven.

Now hard by the mountain was a village wherein dwelt a pious man, who knew not the other's stead, till one night

he saw in a dream one who said to him, 'In such a place near to thee is a pious man : go to him and be at his command.' So when it was day, he set out afoot to go thither, and at the time when the heat was grievous upon him, he came to a tree, which grew beside a spring of running water. He sat down to rest in the shadow of the tree, and birds and beasts came to the spring to drink ; but when they saw him, they took fright and fled. Then said he, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High ! I am resting here, to the hurt of the beasts and fowls.' So he rose and went on, blaming himself and saying, 'My tarrying here hath wronged these beasts and birds, and what excuse have I towards my Creator and the Creator of these creatures, for that I was the cause of their flight from their watering-place and their pasture ? Alas, my confusion before my Lord on the day when He shall avenge the sheep of the goats !' And he wept and repeated the following verses :

By Allah, if men knew for what they are create, They would not lie  
and sleep, unheeding of their fate !  
Soon cometh death, then wake and resurrection come ; Then judgment  
and reproof and terrors passing great.  
Obey we or command, the most of us are like The dwellers in the cave,<sup>1</sup>  
asleep early and late.

Then he fared on, weeping for that he had driven the birds and beasts from the spring by sitting down under the tree, till he came to the shepherd's dwelling and going in, saluted him. The shepherd returned his greeting and embraced him, weeping and saying, 'What brings thee hither, where no man hath ever come in to me ?' Quoth the other, 'I saw in my sleep one who described to me this thy stead and bade me repair to thee and salute thee : so I came, in obedience to the commandment.' The shepherd welcomed him, rejoicing

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* The Seven Sleepers.

in his company, and they both abode in the cavern, doing fair service to their Lord and living upon the flesh and milk of their sheep, having put away from them wealth and children and other the goods of this world, till there came to them Death, the Certain, the Inevitable. And this is the end of their story."

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"O Shehrzad," said King Shehriyar, "thou putttest me out of conceit with my kingdom and makest me repent of having slain so many women and maidens. Hast thou any stories of birds?" "Yes," answered she, and began as follows:

### THE WATER-FOWL AND THE TORTOISE

"A water-fowl flew high up into the air and alighted on a rock in the midst of a running water. As it sat, behold, the water floated up a carcase, that was swollen and rose high out of the water, and lodged it against the rock. The bird drew near and examining it, found that it was the dead body of a man and saw in it spear and sword wounds. So he said in himself, 'Belike, this was some evil-doer, and a company of men joined themselves together against him and slew him and were at peace from him and his mischief.' Whilst he was marvelling at this, vultures and eagles came down upon the carcase from all sides; which when the water-fowl saw, he was sore affrighted and said, 'I cannot endure to abide here longer.' So he flew away in quest of a place where he might harbour, till the carcase should come to an end and the birds of prey leave it, and stayed not in his flight, till he came to a river with a tree in its midst. He alighted on the tree, troubled and distraught and grieved for his separation from his native place, and said to himself, 'Verily grief and vexation cease not to follow

me: I was at my ease, when I saw the carcase, and rejoiced therein exceedingly, saying, "This is a gift of God to me;" but my joy became sorrow and my gladness mourning, for the lions of the birds<sup>1</sup> took it and made prize of it and came between it and me. How can I trust in this world or hope to be secure from misfortune therein? Indeed, the proverb says, "The world is the dwelling of him who hath no dwelling: he who hath no understanding is deceived by it and trusteth in it with his wealth and his child and his family and his folk; nor doth he who is deluded by it leave to rely upon it, walking proudly upon the earth, till he is laid under it and the dust is cast over him by him who was dearest and nearest to him of all men; but nought is better for the noble than patience under its cares and miseries." I have left my native place, and it is abhorrent to me to quit my brethren and friends and loved ones.' Whilst he was thus devising with himself, behold, a tortoise descended into the water and approaching the bird, saluted him, saying, 'O my lord, what hath exiled thee and driven thee afar from thy place?' 'The descent of enemies thereon,' replied the water-fowl; 'for the understanding cannot brook the neighbourhood of his enemy; even as well says the poet:

Whenas on any land the oppressor doth alight, There's nothing left for those, that dwell therein, but flight.'

Quoth the tortoise, 'If the case be as thou sayest, I will not leave thee nor cease to be before thee, that I may do thy need and fulfil thy service; for it is said that there is no sorer desolation than that of him who is an exile, cut off from friends and country; and also that no calamity equals that of severance from virtuous folk; but the best solace for the understanding is to seek companionship in

<sup>1</sup> i.e. The birds of prey.



his strangerhood and be patient under adversity. Wherefore I hope that thou wilt find thine account in my company, for I will be to thee a servant and a helper.' 'Verily, thou art right in what thou sayest,' answered the water-fowl; 'for, by my life, I have found grief and pain in separation, what while I have been absent from my stead and sundered from my friends and brethren, seeing that in severance is an admonition to him who will be admonished and matter of thought for him who will take thought. If one find not a companion to console him, good is cut off from him for ever and evil stablished with him eternally; and there is nothing for the wise but to solace himself in every event with brethren and be instant in patience and constancy; for indeed these two are praiseworthy qualities, that uphold one under calamities and shifts of fortune and ward off affliction and consternation, come what will.' 'Beware of sorrow,' rejoined the tortoise, 'for it will corrupt thy life to thee and do away thy fortitude.' And they gave not over converse, till the bird said, 'Never shall I leave to fear the strokes of fortune and the vicissitudes of events.' When the tortoise heard this, he came up to him and kissing him between the eyes, said to him, 'Never may the company of the birds cease to be blest in thee and find good in thy counsel! How shalt thou be burdened with inquietude and harm?' And he went on to comfort the water-fowl and soothe his disquiet, till he became reassured. Then he flew to the place, where the carcase was, and found the birds of prey gone and nothing left of the body but bones; whereupon he returned to the tortoise and acquainted him with this, saying, 'I wish to return to my stead and enjoy the society of my friends; for the wise cannot endure separation from his native place.' So they both went thither and found nought to affright them; whereupon the water-fowl repeated the following verses:

Full many a sorry chance doth light upon a man and fill His life with trouble, yet with God the issue bideth still.

His case is sore on him, but when its meshes straitened are To utt'rest, they relax, although he deem they never will.

So they abode there in peace and gladness, till one day fate led thither a hungry hawk, which drove its talons into the bird's belly and killed him, nor did caution stand him in stead seeing that his hour was come. Now the cause of his death was that he neglected to praise God, and it is said that his form of adoration was as follows, 'Glory be to our Lord in that He ordereth and ordaineth, and glory be to our Lord in that He maketh rich and maketh poor!'"

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"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "verily, thou over-whelmest me with admonitions and salutary instances! Hast thou any stories of beasts?" "Yes," answered she. "Know, O King, that

### THE WOLF AND THE FOX.

A fox and a wolf once dwelt in the same den, harbouring therein together day and night; but the wolf was cruel and oppressive to the fox. They abode thus awhile, till one day the fox exhorted the wolf to use gentle dealing and leave evil-doing, saying, 'If thou persist in thine arrogance, belike God will give the son of Adam power over thee, for he is past master in guile and craft and knavery. By his devices he brings down the birds from the air and draws the fish forth of the waters and sunders mountains in twain and transports them from place to place. All this is of his craft and wiliness; wherefore do thou betake thyself to equity and fair dealing and leave evil and tyranny; and thou shalt fare the better for it.' But the wolf rejected his counsel and answered him roughly, saying, 'Thou hast no call to speak of matters

of weight and stress.' And he dealt the fox a buffet that laid him senseless; but, when he revived, he smiled in the wolf's face and excused himself for his unseemly speech, repeating the following verses:

If I have sinned in aught that's worthy of reproach Or if I've made default against the love of you,

Lo, I repent my fault; so let thy clemency The sinner comprehend, that doth for pardon sue.

The wolf accepted his excuse and held his hand from him, saying, 'Speak not of that which concerns thee not, Night or thou shalt hear what will not please thee.' 'I hear clix. and obey,' answered the fox; 'henceforth I will abstain from what pleaseth thee not; for the sage says, "Speak thou not of that whereof thou art not asked; answer not, when thou art not called upon; leave that which concerns thee not for that which does concern thee and lavish not good counsel on the wicked, for they will repay thee therefor with evil."' And he smiled in the wolf's face, but in his heart he meditated treachery against him and said in himself, 'Needs must I compass the destruction of this wolf.' So he bore with his ill usage, saying in himself, 'Verily arrogance and falsehood lead to perdition and cast into confusion, and it is said, "He who is arrogant suffers and he who is ignorant repents and he who fears is safe: fair dealing is a characteristic of the noble, and gentle manners are the noblest of gains." It behoves me to dissemble with this tyrant, and needs must he be cast down.' Then said he to the wolf, 'Verily, the Lord pardons his erring servant and relents towards him, if he confess his sins; and I am a weak slave and have sinned in presuming to counsel thee. If thou knewest the pain that befell me by thy buffet, thou wouldst see that an elephant could not stand against it nor endure it: but I complain not of the pain of the blow, because of the contentment that hath betided me through it; for though

it was exceeding grievous to me, yet its issue was gladness. As saith the sage, "The blow of the teacher is at first exceeding grievous, but the end of it is sweeter than clarified honey." Quoth the wolf, 'I pardon thine offence and pass over thy fault; but be thou ware of my strength and avow thyself my slave; for thou knowest how rigorously I deal with those that transgress against me.' Thereupon the fox prostrated himself to the wolf, saying, May God prolong thy life and mayst thou cease never to subdue thine enemies!' And he abode in fear of the wolf and ceased not to wheedle him and dissemble with him.

One day, the fox came to a vineyard and saw a breach in its wall; but he mistrusted it and said in himself, 'Verily, there must be some reason for this breach and the adage says, "He who sees a cleft in the earth and doth not shun it or be wary in going up to it, is self-deluded and exposes himself to destruction." Indeed, it is well known that some folk make a semblant of a fox in their vineyards, even to setting before it grapes in dishes, that foxes may see it and come to it and fall into destruction. Meseems, this breach is a snare and the proverb says, "Prudence is the half of cleverness." Now prudence requires that I examine this breach and see if there be ought therein that may lead to perdition; and covetise shall not make me cast myself into destruction.' So he went up to the breach and examining it warily, discovered a deep pit, lightly covered (with boughs and earth), which the owner of the vineyard had dug, thinking to trap therein the wild beasts that laid waste his vines. Then he drew back from it, saying in himself, 'I have found it as I expected. Praised be God that I was wary of it! I hope that my enemy the wolf, who makes my life miserable, will fall into it; so will the vineyard be left to me and I shall enjoy it alone and dwell therein in peace.' So



saying, he shook his head and laughed aloud, repeating the following verses :

Would God I might see, even now, A wolf fallen into yon pit,  
That this long time hath tortured my heart And made me quaff bitters,  
God wit !  
God grant I may live and be spared And eke of the wolf be made  
quit !  
So the vineyard of him shall be rid And I find my purchase in it.

Then he returned in haste to the wolf and said to him, 'God hath made plain the way for thee into the vineyard, without toil. This is of thy good luck ; so mayst thou enjoy the easy booty and the plentiful provant that God hath opened up to thee without trouble !' 'What proof hast thou of what thou sayest ?' asked the wolf ; and the fox answered, 'I went up to the vineyard and found that the owner was dead, having been devoured by wolves : so I entered and saw the fruit shining on the trees.' The wolf misdoubted not of the fox's report and gluttony got hold on him ; so he rose and repaired to the breach, blinded by greed ; whilst the fox stopped short and lay as one dead, applying to the case the following verse :

Lustest after Leila's favours ? Look thou rather bear in mind That 'tis  
covetise plays havoc with the necks of human kind.

Then said he to the wolf, 'Enter the vineyard : thou art spared the trouble of climbing, for the wall is broken down, and with God be the rest of the benefit.' So the wolf went on, thinking to enter the vineyard ; but when he came to the middle of the covering (of the pit), he fell in ; whereupon the fox shook for delight and gladness ; his care and concern left him and he sang out for joy and recited the following verses :

Fortune hath taken ruth on my case ; Yea, she hath pitied the length  
of my pain,  
Doing away from me that which I feared And granting me that whereto  
I was fain.

So I will pardon her all the sins She sinned against me once and  
again ;  
Since for the wolf there is no escape From certain ruin and bitter  
bane,  
And now the vineyard is all my own And no fool sharer in my  
domain.

Then he looked into the pit, and seeing the wolf weeping for sorrow and repentance over himself, wept with him ; whereupon the wolf raised his head to him and said, 'Is it of pity for me thou weepest, O Aboulhussein ?'<sup>1</sup> 'Not so,' answered the fox, 'by Him who cast thee into the pit ! I weep for the length of thy past life and for regret that thou didst not sooner fall into the pit ; for hadst thou done so before I met with thee, I had been at peace : but thou wast spared till the fulfilment of thine allotted term.' The wolf thought he was jesting and said, 'O sinner, go to my mother and tell her what has befallen me, so haply she may make shift for my release.' 'Verily,' answered the fox, 'the excess of thy gluttony and thy much greed have brought thee to destruction, since thou art fallen into a pit whence thou wilt never escape. O witless wolf, knowest thou not the proverb, "He who taketh no thought to results, Fate is no friend to him, nor shall he be safe from perils?"' 'O Aboulhussein,' said the wolf, 'thou wast wont to show me affection and covet my friendship and fear the greatness of my strength. Bear me not malice for that I did with thee, for he who hath power and forgiveth, his reward is with God ; even as saith the poet :

Sow benefits aye, though in other than fitting soil. A benefit's never  
lost, wherever it may be sown ;  
And though time tarry full long to bring it to harvest-tide, Yet no man  
reapeth its fruit, save he who sowed it alone.'

'O most witless of beasts of prey and stupidest of the

<sup>1</sup> "O thou of the little stronghold." A sobriquet popularly bestowed on the fox, even as we call him "Reynard."

wildings of the earth,' rejoined the fox, 'hast thou forgotten thine arrogance and pride and tyranny and how thou disregardedst the due of comradeship and wouldst not take counsel by what the poet says :

Do no oppression, whilst the power thereto is in thine hand, For still  
in danger of revenge the sad oppressor goes.

Thine eyes will sleep anon, what while the opprest, on wake, call down  
Curses upon thee, and God's eye shuts never in repose.'

'O Aboulhussein,' replied the wolf, 'reproach me not for past offences ; for forgiveness is expected of the noble, and the practice of kindness is the best of treasures. How well says the poet :

Hasten to do good works, whenever thou hast the power, For thou art  
not able thereto at every season and hour.'

And he went on to humble himself to the fox and say to him, 'Haply, thou canst do somewhat to deliver me from destruction.' 'O witless, deluded, perfidious, crafty wolf,' answered the fox, 'hope not for deliverance, for this is but the just reward of thy foul dealing.' Then he laughed from ear to ear and repeated the following verses :

A truce to thy strife to beguile me ! For nothing of me shalt thou gain.  
Thy prayers are but idle ; thou sowedst Vexation ; so reap it again.

'O gentlest of beasts of prey,' said the wolf, 'I deem thee too faithful to leave me in this pit.' Then he wept and sighed and recited the following verses, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes :

O thou, whose kindnesses to me are more than one, I trow, Whose  
bounties unto me vouchsafed are countless as the sand,  
No shift of fortune in my time has ever fall'n on me, But I have found  
thee ready still to take me by the hand.

'O stupid enemy,' said the fox, 'how art thou reduced to humility and obsequiousness and abjection and submission, after disdain and pride and tyranny and arrogance ! Verily, I companied with thee and cajoled thee but for

fear of thy violence and not in hope of fair treatment from thee: but now trembling is come upon thee and vengeance hath overtaken thee.' And he repeated the following verses:

O thou that for aye on beguiling art bent, Thou'rt fall'n in the snare of thine evil intent.

So taste of the anguish that knows no relent And be with the rest of the wolvern forspent !

'O clement one,' replied the wolf, 'speak not with the tongue of despite nor look with its eyes; but fulfil the covenant of fellowship with me, ere the time for action pass away. Rise, make shift to get me a rope and tie one end of it to a tree; then let the other end down to me, that I may lay hold of it, so haply I may escape from this my strait, and I will give thee all my hand possesseth of treasures.' Quoth the fox, 'Thou persistest in talk of that wherein thy deliverance is not. Hope not for this, for thou shalt not get of me wherewithal to save thyself; but call to mind thy past ill deeds and the craft and perfidy thou didst imagine against me and bethink thee how near thou art to being stoned to death. For know that thy soul is about to leave the world and cease and depart from it; so shalt thou come to destruction and evil is the abiding-place to which thou goest!' 'O Aboul-hussein,' rejoined the wolf, 'hasten to return to friendliness and persist not in this rancour. Know that he, who saves a soul from perdition, is as if he had restored it to life, and he, who saves a soul alive, is as if he had saved all mankind. Do not ensue wickedness, for the wise forbid it: and it were indeed the most manifest wickedness to leave me in this pit to drink the agony of death and look upon destruction, whenas it lies in thy power to deliver me from my strait. Wherefore go thou about to release me and deal benevolently with me.' 'O thou barbarous wretch,' answered the fox, 'I liken thee, because



of the fairness of thy professions and the foulness of thine intent and thy practice, to the hawk with the partridge.' 'How so?' asked the wolf; and the fox said,

### THE HAWK AND THE PARTRIDGE.

'I entered a vineyard one day and saw a hawk stoop upon a partridge and seize it: but the partridge escaped from him and entering its nest, hid itself there. The hawk followed and called out to it, saying, "O wittol, I saw thee in the desert, hungry, and took pity on thee; so I gathered grain for thee and took hold of thee that thou mightest eat; but thou fledst, wherefore I know not, except it were to slight me. So come out and take the grain I have brought thee to eat, and much good may it do thee!" The partridge believed what he said and came out, whereupon the hawk stuck his talons into him and seized him. "Is this that which thou saidst thou hadst brought me from the desert," cried the partridge, "and of which thou badest me eat, saying, 'Much good may it do thee?' Thou hast lied to me and may God make what thou eatest of my flesh to be a deadly poison in thy maw!" So when the hawk had eaten the partridge, his feathers fell off and his strength failed and he died on the spot. Know, then, O wolf, that he, who digs a pit for his brother, soon falls into it himself, and thou first dealtest perfidiously with me.' 'Spare me this talk and these moral instances,' said the wolf, 'and remind me not of my former ill deeds, for the sorry plight I am in suffices me, seeing that I am fallen into a place, in which even my enemy would pity me, to say nothing of my friend. So make thou some shift to deliver me and be thou thereby my saviour. If this cause thee aught of hardship, think that a true friend will endure the sorest travail for his friend's sake and risk his life to deliver him from perdition; and indeed it hath been said, "A tender friend

is better than an own brother." So if thou bestir thyself and help me and deliver me, I will gather thee such store of gear, as shall be a provision for thee against the time of want, and teach thee rare tricks to gain access to fruitful vineyards and strip the fruit-laden trees.' 'How excellent,' rejoined the fox, laughing, 'is what the learned say of those who are past measure ignorant, like unto thee!' 'What do they say?' asked the wolf; and the fox answered, 'They say that the gross of body are gross of nature, far from understanding and nigh unto ignorance. As for thy saying, O perfidious, stupid self-deceiver, that a friend should suffer hardship to succour his friend, it is true, as thou sayest: but tell me, of thine ignorance and poverty of wit, how can I be a true friend to thee, considering thy treachery? Dost thou count me thy friend? Behold, I am thine enemy, that exulteth in thy misfortune; and couldst thou understand it, this word were sorer to thee than slaughter and arrow-shot. As for thy promise to provide me a store against the time of want and teach me tricks to enter vineyards and spoil fruit-trees, how comes it, O crafty traitor, that thou knowest not a trick to save thyself from destruction? How far art thou from profiting thyself and how far am I from lending ear to thy speech! If thou have any tricks, make shift for thyself to save thee from this peril, wherefrom I pray God to make thine escape distant! So look, O idiot, if there be any trick with thee and save thyself from death therewith, before thou lavish instruction on others. But thou art like a certain sick man, who went to another, suffering from the same disease, and said to him, "Shall I heal thee of thy disease?" "Why dost thou not begin by healing thyself?" answered the other; so he left him and went his way. And thou, O ignorant wolf, art like this; so stay where thou art and be patient under what hath befallen thee.' When the wolf heard what the fox said, he knew he had no hope from

him ; so he wept for himself, saying, ' Verily, I have been heedless of mine affair ; but if God deliver me from this scrape, I will assuredly repent of my arrogance towards those who are weaker than I and will put on wool and go upon the mountains, celebrating the praises of God the Most High and fearing His wrath. Yea, I will sunder myself from all the other wild beasts and feed the poor and those who fight for the Faith.' Then he wept and lamented, till the heart of the fox was softened and he took pity on him, whenas he heard his humble words and his professions of repentance for his past arrogance and tyranny. So he sprang up joyfully and going to the brink of the pit, sat down on his hind quarters and let his tail fall therein ; whereupon the wolf arose and putting out his paw, pulled the fox's tail, so that he fell down into the pit with him. Then said the wolf, ' O fox of little ruth, why didst thou exult over me, thou that wast my companion and under my dominion ? Now thou art fallen into the pit with me and retribution hath soon overtaken thee. Verily, the wise have said, " If one of you reproach his brother with sucking the teats of a bitch, he also shall suck her," and how well saith the poet :

When fortune's blows on some fall hard and heavily, With others of our kind as friend encampeth she.

So say to those who joy in our distress, " Awake ; For those who mock our woes shall suffer even as we."

And death in company is the best of things ; wherefore I will make haste to kill thee, ere thou see me killed.' ' Alas ! Alas !' said the fox in himself. ' I am fallen in with this tyrant, and my case calls for the use of craft and cunning ; for indeed it is said that a woman fashions her ornaments for the festival day, and quoth the proverb, " I have kept thee, O my tear, against the time of my distress !" Except I make shift to circumvent this overbearing beast, I am lost without recourse ; and how well says the poet :

Provide thee by craft, for thou liv'st in a time Whose folk are as lions  
that lurk in a wood,  
And set thou the mill-stream of knavery abroad, That the mill of subsistence may grind for thy food,  
And pluck the fruits boldly ; but if they escape From thy grasp, then content thee with hay to thy food.'

Then said he to the wolf, 'Hasten not to slay me, for that is not my desert and thou wouldst repent it, O valiant beast, lord of might and exceeding prowess ! If thou hold thy hand and consider what I shall tell thee, thou wilt know that which I purpose ; but if thou hasten to kill me, it will profit thee nothing and we shall both die here.' 'O wily deceiver,' answered the wolf, 'how hopest thou to work my deliverance and thine own, that thou wouldst have me grant thee time ? Speak and let me know thy purpose.' 'As for my purpose,' replied the fox, 'it was such as deserves that thou reward me handsomely for it ; for when I heard thy promises and thy confession of thy past ill conduct and regrets for not having earlier repented and done good and thy vows, shouldst thou escape from this thy stress, to leave harming thy fellows and others and forswear eating grapes and other fruits and devote thyself to humility and cut thy claws and break thy teeth and don wool and offer thyself as a sacrifice to God the Most High, —when (I say), I heard thy repentance and vows of amendment, compassion took me for thee, though before I was anxious for thy destruction, and I felt bound to save thee from this thy present plight. So I let down my tail, that thou mightest grasp it and make thine escape. Yet wouldst thou not put off thy wonted violence and brutality nor soughtest to save thyself by fair means, but gavest me such a tug that I thought my soul would depart my body, so that thou and I are become involved in the same stead of ruin and death. There is but one thing can deliver us, to which if thou agree, we shall both escape ; and after it



behoves thee to keep the vows thou hast made, and I will be thy friend.' 'What is it thou hast to propose?' asked the wolf. 'It is,' answered the fox, 'that thou stand up, and I will climb up on to thy head and so bring myself nigh on a level with the surface of the earth. Then will I give a spring and as soon as I reach the ground, I will fetch thee what thou mayst lay hold of and make thine escape.' 'I have no faith in thy word,' rejoined the wolf, 'for the wise have said, "He who practises trust in the place of hate, errs," and "He who trusts in the faithless is a dupe; he who tries those that have been [already] tried (and found wanting) shall reap repentance and his days shall pass away without profit; and he who cannot distinguish between cases, giving each its due part, his good fortune will be small and his afflictions many." How well saith the poet:

Be thy thought ever ill and of all men beware; Suspicion of good parts  
the helpfulest was e'er.

For nothing brings a man to peril and distress As doth the doing good  
(to men) and thinking fair.

And another:

Be constant ever in suspect; 'twill save thee aye anew; For he who  
lives a wakeful life, his troubles are but few.

Meet thou the foeman in thy way with open, smiling face; But in thy  
heart set up a host shall battle with him do.

And yet another:

Thy worst of foes is thy nearest friend, in whom thou puttest trust; So  
look thou be on thy guard with men and use them warily aye.

'Tis weakness to augur well of fate; think rather ill of it And be in fear  
of its shifts and tricks, lest it should thee bewray.'

'Verily,' said the fox, 'distrust is not to be commended in every case; on the contrary, a confiding disposition is the characteristic of a noble nature and its issue is freedom from terrors. Now it behoves thee, O wolf, to put in practice some device for thy deliverance from this thou art in

and the escape of us both will be better than our death : so leave thy distrust and rancour ; for if thou trust in me, one of two things will happen ; either I shall bring thee whereof to lay hold and escape, or I shall play thee false and save myself and leave thee ; and this latter may not be, for I am not safe from falling into some such strait as this thou art in, which would be fitting punishment of perfidy. Indeed the adage saith, "Faith is fair and perfidy foul." It behoves thee, therefore, to trust in me, for I am not ignorant of the vicissitudes of Fortune : so delay not to contrive some device for our deliverance, for the case is too urgent for further talk.' 'To tell thee the truth,' replied the wolf, 'for all my want of confidence in thy fidelity, I knew what was in thy mind and that thou wast minded to deliver me, whenas thou heardest my repentance, and I said in myself, "If what he asserts be true, he will have repaired the ill he did : and if false, it rests with God to requite him." So, behold, I accept thy proposal, and if thou betray me, may thy perfidy be the cause of thy destruction!' Then he stood upright in the pit and taking the fox upon his shoulders, raised him to the level of the ground, whereupon the latter gave a spring and lighted on the surface of the earth. When he found himself in safety, he fell down senseless, and the wolf said to him, 'O my friend, neglect not my case and delay not to deliver me.' The fox laughed derisively and replied, 'O dupe, it was but my laughing at thee and making mock of thee that threw me into thy hands : for when I heard thee profess repentance, mirth and gladness seized me and I frisked about and danced and made merry, so that my tail fell down into the pit and thou caughtest hold of it and draggedst me down with thee. Why should I be other than a helper in thy destruction, seeing that thou art of the host of the devil? I dreamt yesterday that I danced at thy wedding and related my dream to an interpreter,

who told me that I should fall into a great danger and escape from it. So now I know that my falling into thy hand and my escape are the fulfilment of my dream, and thou, O ignorant dupe, knowest me for thine enemy; so how canst thou, of thine ignorance and lack of wit, hope for deliverance at my hands, after all thou hast heard of harsh words from me, and wherefore should I endeavour for thy deliverance, whenas the wise have said, "In the death of the wicked is peace for mankind and purgation for the earth?" Yet, but that I fear to reap more affliction by keeping faith with thee than could follow perfidy, I would do my endeavour to save thee.'

Night  
cl.

When the wolf heard this, he bit his paws for despite and was at his wit's end what to do. Then he gave the fox fair words, but this availed nought; so he said to him softly, 'Verily, you foxes are the most pleasant spoken of folk and the subtlest in jest, and this is but a jest of thine; but all times are not good for sport and jesting.' 'O dolt,' answered the fox, 'jesting hath a limit, that the jester overpasses not, and deem not that God will again give thee power over me, after having once delivered me from thee.' Quoth the wolf, 'It behoves thee to endeavour for my release, by reason of our brotherhood and fellowship, and if thou deliver me, I will assuredly make fair thy reward.' 'The wise say,' rejoined the fox, "'Fraternize not with the ignorant and wicked, for he will shame thee and not adorn thee,—nor with the liar, for if thou do good, he will hide it, and if evil, he will publish it;" and again, "There is help for everything but death: all may be mended, save natural depravity, and everything may be warded off, except Fate." As for the reward thou promisest me, I liken thee therein to the serpent that fled from the charmer. A man saw her affrighted and said to her, "What ails thee, O serpent?" Quoth she, "I am fleeing from the serpent-charmer, who is in chase of me;

and if thou wilt save me and hide me with thee, I will make fair thy recompense and do thee all manner of kindness." So he took her, moved both by desire of the promised recompense and a wish to find favour with God, and hid her in his bosom. When the charmer had passed and gone his way and the serpent had no longer any reason to fear, he said to her, "Where is the recompense thou didst promise me? Behold, I have saved thee from that thou darest." "Tell me where I shall bite thee," replied she, "for thou knowest we overpass not that recompense." So saying, she gave him a bite, of which he died. And I liken thee, O dullard, to the serpent in her dealings with the man. Hast thou not heard what the poet says?

Trust not in one in whose heart thou hast made wrath to abide And  
thinkest his anger at last is over and pacified.  
Verily vipers, though smooth and soft to the feel and the eye And graceful  
of movements they be, yet death-dealing venom they hide.'

'O glib-tongue, lord of the fair face,' said the wolf, 'thou art not ignorant of my case and of men's fear of me and knowest how I assault the strong places and root up the vines. Wherefore, do as I bid thee and bear thyself to me as a servant to his lord.' 'O stupid dullard,' answered the fox, 'that seekest a vain thing, I marvel at thy stupidity and effrontery, in that thou biddest me serve thee and order myself towards thee as I were a slave bought with thy money; but thou shalt see what is in store for thee, in the way of breaking thy head with stones and knocking out thy traitor's teeth.' So saying, he went up to a hill that gave upon the vineyard and standing there, called out to the people of the place, nor did he give over crying, till he woke them and they, seeing him, came up to him in haste. He held his ground till they drew near him and near the pit, when he turned and fled. So they looked into the pit and spying the wolf, fell to pelting him with heavy stones, nor did they leave smiting him



with sticks and stones and piercing him with lances, till they killed him and went away ; whereupon the fox returned to the pit and looking down, saw the wolf dead : so he wagged his head for excess of joy and chanted the following verses :

**Fate** took the soul o' the wolf and snatched it far away ; Foul fall it for  
a soul that's lost and perished aye !

**How** oft, O Gaffer Grim, my ruin hast thou sought ! But unrelenting  
bale is fallen on thee this day.

**Thou** fellst into a pit, wherein there's none may fall Except the blasts of  
death blow on him for a prey.

Then he abode alone in the vineyard, secure and fearing  
no hurt.

### THE MOUSE AND THE WEASEL.

A mouse and a weasel once dwelt in the house of a poor peasant, one of whose friends fell sick and the doctor prescribed him husked sesame. So he sought of one of his comrades sesame and gave the peasant a measure thereof to husk for him ; and he carried it home to his wife and bade her dress it. So she steeped it and husked it and spread it out to dry. When the weasel saw the grain, he came up to it and fell to carrying it away to his hole, nor stinted all day, till he had borne off the most of it. Presently, in came the peasant's wife, and seeing great part of the sesame gone, stood awhile wondering ; after which she sat down to watch and find out the cause. After awhile, out came the weasel to carry off more of the grain, but spying the woman seated there, knew that she was on the watch for him and said to himself, 'Verily, this affair is like to end ill. I fear me this woman is on the watch for me and Fortune is no friend to those who look not to the issues : so I must do a fair deed, whereby I may manifest my innocence and wash out all the ill I have done.' So saying, he began to take of the sesame in his hole and

carry it out and lay it back upon the rest. The woman stood by and seeing the weasel do thus, said in herself, 'Verily, this is not the thief, for he brings it back from the hole of him that stole it and returns it to its place. Indeed, he hath done us a kindness in restoring us the sesame and the reward of those that do us good is that we do them the like. It is clear that this is not he who stole the grain. But I will not leave watching till I find out who is the thief.' The weasel guessed what was in her mind, so he went to the mouse and said to her, 'O my sister, there is no good in him who does not observe the claims of neighbourship and shows no constancy in friendship.' 'True, O my friend,' answered the mouse, 'and I delight in thee and in thy neighbourhood; but what is the motive of thy speech?' Quoth the weasel, 'The master of the house has brought home sesame and has eaten his fill of it, he and his family, and left much; every living soul has eaten of it, and if thou take of it in thy turn, thou art worthier thereof than any other.' This pleased the mouse and she chirped and danced and frisked her ears and tail, and greed for the grain deluded her; so she rose at once and issuing forth of her hole, saw the sesame peeled and dry, shining with whiteness, and the woman sitting watching, armed with a stick. The mouse could not contain herself, but taking no thought to the issue of the affair, ran up to the sesame and fell to messing it and eating of it; whereupon the woman smote her with the stick and cleft her head in twain: so her greed and heedlessness of the issue of her actions led to her destruction."

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"By Allah," said the Sultan to Shehrzad, "this is a goodly story! Hast thou any story bearing upon the beauty of true friendship and the observance of its obligations in time of distress and rescuing from destruction?" "Yes," answered she; "it hath reached me that

### THE CAT AND THE CROW.

A crow and a cat once lived in brotherhood. One day, as they were together under a tree, they spied a leopard making towards them, of which they had not been ware, till he was close upon them. The crow at once flew up to the top of the tree; but the cat abode confounded and said to the crow, 'O my friend, hast thou no device to save me? All my hope is in thee.' 'Indeed,' answered the crow, 'it behoveth brethren, in case of need, to cast about for a device, whenas any peril overtakes them, and right well saith the poet:

He is a right true friend who is with thee indeed And will himself undo,  
to help thee in thy need,  
Who, when love's severance is by evil fate decreed, To join your  
sundered lives will risk his own and bleed.'

Now hard by the tree were shepherds with their dogs; so the crow flew towards them and smote the face of the earth with his wings, cawing and crying out, to draw their attention. Then he went up to one of the dogs and flapped his wings in his eyes and flew up a little way, whilst the dog ran after him, thinking to catch him. Presently, one of the shepherds raised his head and saw the bird flying near the ground and lighting now and then; so he followed him, and the crow gave not over flying just out of the dogs' reach and tempting them to pursue and snap at him: but as soon as they came near him, he would fly up a little; and so he brought them to the tree. When they saw the leopard, they rushed upon it, and it turned and fled. Now the leopard thought to eat the cat, but the latter was saved by the craft of its friend the crow. This story, O King, shows that the friendship of the virtuous saves and delivers from difficulties and dangers.

## THE FOX AND THE CROW.

A fox once dwelt in a cave of a certain mountain, and as often as a cub was born to him and grew stout, he would eat it, for, except he did so, he had died of hunger; and this was grievous to him. Now on the top of the same mountain a crow had made his nest, and the fox said to himself, 'I have a mind to strike up a friendship with this crow and make a comrade of him, that he may help me to my day's meat, for he can do what I cannot.' So he made for the crow's stead, and when he came within earshot, he saluted him, saying, 'O my neighbour, verily a true-believer hath two claims upon his true-believing neighbour, that of neighbourliness and that of community of faith; and know, O my friend, that thou art my neighbour and hast a claim upon me, which it behoves me to observe, the more that I have been long thy neighbour. Moreover, God hath set in my breast a store of love to thee, that bids me speak thee fair and solicit thy friendship. What sayst thou?' 'Verily,' answered the crow, 'the best speech is that which is soothest, and most like thou speakest with thy tongue that which is not in thy heart. I fear lest thy friendship be but of the tongue, outward, and thine enmity of the heart, inward; for that thou art the Eater and I the Eaten, and to hold aloof one from the other were more apt to us than friendship and fellowship. What, then, maketh thee seek that thou mayst not come at and desire what may not be, seeing that thou art of the beast and I of the bird kind? Verily, this brotherhood [thou profferest] may not be, neither were it seemly.' 'He who knoweth the abiding-place of excellent things,' rejoined the fox, 'better's choice in what he chooses therefrom, so haply he may win to advantage his brethren; and indeed I should love to be near thee and I have chosen thy companionship, to the end that we may help one



another to our several desires ; and success shall surely wait upon our loves. I have store of tales of the goodness of friendship, which, an it like thee, I will relate to thee.' 'Thou hast my leave,' answered the crow ; 'let me hear thy story and weigh it and judge of thine intent thereby.' 'Hear then, O my friend,' rejoined the fox, 'that which is told of a mouse and a flea and which bears out what I have said to thee.' 'How so?' asked the crow. 'It is said,' answered the fox, 'that

### THE MOUSE AND THE FLEA.

A mouse once dwelt in the house of a rich and busy merchant. One night, a flea took shelter in the merchant's bed and finding his body soft and being athirst, drank of his blood. The smart of the bite awoke the merchant, who sat up and called to his serving men and maids. So they hastened to him and tucking up their sleeves, fell to searching for the flea. As soon as the latter was ware of the search, he turned to flee and happening on the mouse's hole, entered it. When the mouse saw him, she said to him, "What brings thee in to me, seeing that thou art not of my kind and canst not therefore be assured of safety from violence or ill-usage?" "Verily," answered the flea, "I took refuge in thy dwelling from slaughter and come to thee, seeking thy protection and not anywise coveting thy house, nor shall aught of mischief betide thee from me nor aught to make thee leave it. Nay, I hope to repay thy favours to me with all good, and thou shalt assuredly see and praise the issue of my words." "If the case be as thou sayest," answered the mouse, "be at thine ease here ; for nought shall betide thee, save what may pleasure thee ; there shall fall on thee rain of peace alone nor shall aught befall thee, but what befalls me. I will give thee my love without stint and do not thou regret thy loss of the

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merchant's blood nor lament for thy subsistence from him, but be content with what little of sufficient sustenance thou canst lightly come by; for indeed this is the safer for thee, and I have heard that one of the moral poets saith as follows :

I have trodden the road of content and retirement And lived out my life  
with whatever betided;

With a morsel of bread and a draught of cold water, Coarse salt and  
patched garments content I abided.

If God willed it, He made my life easy of living; Else, I was contented  
with what He provided."

"O my sister," rejoined the flea, "I hearken to thine injunction and submit myself to yield thee obedience, nor have I power to gainsay thee, till life be fulfilled, in this fair intent." "Purity of intent suffices to sincere affection," replied the mouse. So love befell and was contracted between them and after this, the flea used (by night) to go to the merchant's bed and not exceed moderation (in sucking his blood) and harbour with the mouse by day in the latter's hole. One night, the merchant brought home great store of dinars and began to turn them over. When the mouse heard the chink of the coin, she put her head out of her hole and gazed at it, till the merchant laid it under his pillow and went to sleep, when she said to the flea, "Seest thou not the favourable opportunity and the great good fortune! Hast thou any device to bring us to our desire of yonder dinars?" "Verily," answered the flea, "it is not good for one to strive for aught, but if he be able to compass his desire; for if he lack of ableness thereto, he falls into that of which he should be ware and attains not his wish for weakness, though he use all possible cunning, like the sparrow that picks up grain and falls into the net and is caught by the fowler. Thou hast no strength to take the dinars and carry them into thy hole, nor can I do this; on the contrary, I could not

lift a single dinar; so what hast thou to do with them?" Quoth the mouse, "I have made me these seventy openings, whence I may go out, and set apart a place for things of price, strong and safe; and if thou canst contrive to get the merchant out of the house, I doubt not of success, so Fate aid me." "I will engage to get him out of the house for thee," answered the flea and going to the merchant's bed, gave him a terrible bite, such as he had never before felt, then fled to a place of safety. The merchant awoke and sought for the flea, but finding it not, lay down again on his other side. Then came the flea and bit him again, more sharply than before. So he lost patience and leaving his bed, went out and lay down on the bench before the door and slept there and awoke not till the morning. Meanwhile the mouse came out and fell to carrying the dinars into her hole, till not one was left; and when it was day, the merchant began to accuse the folk and imagine all manner of things. And know, O wise, clear-sighted and experienced crow (continued the fox), that I only tell thee this to the intent that thou mayst reap the recompense of thy goodness to me, even as the mouse reaped the reward of her kindness to the flea; for see how he repaid her and requited her with the goodliest of requitals.' Quoth the crow, 'It lies with the benefactor to show benevolence or not; nor is it incumbent on us to behave kindly to whoso seeks an impossible connection. If I show thee favour, who art by nature my enemy, I am the cause of my own destruction, and thou, O fox, art full of craft and cunning. Now those, whose characteristics these are, are not to be trusted upon oath, and he who is not to be trusted upon oath, there is no good faith in him. I heard but late of thy perfidious dealing with thy comrade the wolf and how thou leddest him into destruction by thy perfidy and guile, and this though he was of thine own kind and thou hadst long companied with

him; yet didst thou not spare him; and if thou didst thus with thy fellow, that was of thine own kind, how can I have confidence in thy fidelity and what would be thy dealing with thine enemy of other than thy kind? Nor can I liken thee and me but to the Falcon and the Birds.' 'How so?' asked the fox. 'They say,' answered the crow, 'that

### THE FALCON AND THE BIRDS.

There was once a falcon who was a cruel tyrant in the <sup>Night</sup> days of his youth, so that the beasts of prey of the air <sup>cliff.</sup> and of the earth feared him and none was safe from his mischief; and many were the instances of his tyranny, for he did nothing but oppress and injure all the other birds. As the years passed over him, he grew weak and his strength failed, so that he was oppressed with hunger; but his cunning increased with the waning of his strength and he redoubled in his endeavour and determined to go to the general rendezvous of the birds, that he might eat their leavings, and in this manner he gained his living by cunning, whenas he could do so no longer by strength and violence. And thou, O fox, art like this: if thy strength fail thee, thy cunning fails not; and I doubt not that thy seeking my friendship is a device to get thy subsistence; but I am none of those who put themselves at thy mercy, for God hath given me strength in my wings and caution in my heart and sight in my eyes, and I know that he who apeth a stronger than he, wearieth himself and is often destroyed, wherefore I fear for thee lest, if thou ape a stronger than thou, there befall thee what befell the sparrow.' 'What befell the sparrow?' asked the fox. 'I conjure thee, by Allah, to tell me his story.' 'I have heard,' replied the crow, 'that



## THE SPARROW AND THE EAGLE.

A sparrow was once hovering over a sheep-fold, when he saw a great eagle swoop down upon a lamb and carry it off in his claws. Thereupon the sparrow clapped his wings and said, "I will do even as the eagle hath done;" and he conceited himself and aped a greater than he. So he flew down forthright and lighted on the back of a fat ram, with a thick fleece that was become matted, by his lying in his dung and stale, till it was like felt. As soon as the sparrow lighted on the sheep's back, he clapped his wings and would have flown away, but his feet became tangled in the wool and he could not win free. All this while the shepherd was looking on, having seen as well what happened with the eagle as with the sparrow; so he came up to the latter in a rage and seized him. Then he plucked out his wing-feathers and tying his feet with a twine, carried him to his children and threw him to them. "What is this?" asked they and he answered, "This is one that aped a greater than himself and came to grief." Now thou, O fox,' continued the crow, 'art like this and I would have thee beware of aping a greater than thou, lest thou perish. This is all I have to say to thee; so go from me in peace.' When the fox despaired of the crow's friendship, he turned away, groaning and gnashing his teeth for sorrow and disappointment, which when the crow heard, he said to him, 'O fox, why dost thou gnash thy teeth?' 'Because I find thee wilier than myself,' answered the fox and made off to his den."

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"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "how excellent and delightful are these thy stories! Hast thou more of the like edifying tales?" "It is said," answered she, "that

## THE HEDGEHOG AND THE PIGEONS.

A hedgehog once took up his abode under a palm-tree, on which roosted a pair of wood-pigeons, that had made their nest there and lived an easy life, and he said to himself, 'These pigeons eat of the fruit of the palm-tree, and I have no means of getting at it; but needs must I go about with them.' So he dug a hole at the foot of the palm-tree and took up his lodging there, he and his wife. Moreover, he made a place of prayer beside the hole, in which he shut himself and made a show of piety and abstinence and renunciation of the world. The male pigeon saw him praying and worshipping and inclined to him for his much devoutness and said to him, 'How long hast thou been thus?' 'Thirty years,' replied the hedgehog. 'What is thy food?' asked the bird and the other answered, 'What falls from the palm-tree.' 'And what is thy clothing?' asked the pigeon. 'Prickles,' replied the hedgehog; 'I profit by their roughness.' 'And why,' continued the bird, 'hast thou chosen this place rather than another?' 'I chose it,' answered the hedgehog, 'that I might guide the erring into the right way and teach the ignorant.' 'I had thought thee other-guise than this,' rejoined the pigeon; 'but now I feel a yearning for that which is with thee.' Quoth the hedgehog, 'I fear lest thy deed belie thy speech and thou be even as the husbandman, who neglected to sow in season, saying, "I fear lest the days bring me not to my desire, and I shall only waste my substance by making haste to sow." When the time of harvest came and he saw the folk gathering in their crops, he repented him of what he had lost by his tardiness and died of chagrin and vexation.' 'What then shall I do,' asked the pigeon, 'that I may be freed from the bonds of the world and give myself up altogether to the service of my Lord?' 'Betake thee to preparing for the next world,' answered

the hedgehog, 'and content thyself with a pittance of food.' 'How can I do this,' said the pigeon, 'I that am a bird and may not go beyond the palm-tree whereon is my food? Nor, could I do so, do I know another place, wherein I may abide.' Quoth the hedgehog, 'Thou canst shake down of the fruit of the palm what shall suffice thee and thy wife for a year's victual; then do ye take up your abode in a nest under the tree, that ye may seek to be guided in the right way, and do ye turn to what ye have shaken down and store it up against the time of need; and when the fruits are spent and the time is long upon you, address yourselves to abstinence from food.' 'May God requite thee with good,' exclaimed the pigeon, 'for the fair intent with which thou hast reminded me of the world to come and hast directed me into the right way!' Then he and his wife busied themselves in knocking down the dates, till nothing was left on the palm-tree, whilst the hedgehog, finding whereof to eat, rejoiced and filled his den with the dates, storing them up for his subsistence and saying in himself, 'When the pigeon and his wife have need of their provant, they will seek it of me, trusting in my devoutness and abstinence; and from what they have heard of my pious counsels and admonitions, they will draw near unto me. Then will I seize them and eat them, after which I shall have the place and all that drops from the palm-tree, to suffice me.' Presently the pigeon and his wife came down and finding that the hedgehog had carried off all the dates, said to him, 'O pious and devout-spoken hedgehog of good counsel, we can find no sign of the dates and know not on what else we shall feed.' 'Belike,' replied the hedgehog, 'the winds have carried them away; but the turning from the provision to the Provider is of the essence of prosperity, and He who cut the corners of the mouth will not leave it without victual.' And he gave not over preaching to them thus and making a show

of piety and cozening them with fine words, till they put faith in him and entered his den, without suspicion, whereupon he sprang to the door and gnashed his tusks, and the pigeon, seeing his perfidy manifested, said to him, 'What has to-night to do with yester-night? Knowest thou not that there is a Helper for the oppressed? Beware of treachery and craft, lest there befall thee what befell the sharpers who plotted against the merchant.' 'What was that?' asked the hedgehog. 'I have heard tell,' answered the pigeon, 'that

### THE MERCHANT AND THE TWO SHARPERS.

There was once in a city called Sendeh a very wealthy merchant, who made ready merchandise and set out with it for such a city, thinking to sell it there. There followed him two sharpers, who had made up into bales what goods they could get and giving out to him that they also were merchants, companied with him by the way. At the first halting-place, they agreed to play him false and take his goods; but, at the same time, each purposed inwardly foul play to the other, saying in himself, "If I can cheat my comrade, it will be well for me and I shall have all to myself." So each took food and putting therein poison, brought it to his fellow; and they both ate of the poisoned mess and died. Now they had been sitting talking with the merchant; so when they left him and were long absent from him, he sought for them and found them both dead; whereby he knew that they were sharpers, who had plotted to play him foul, but their treachery had recoiled upon themselves; so the merchant was preserved and took what they had."

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"O Shehrzad," said the Sultan, "verily thou hast aroused me to all whereof I was negligent! Continue to edify me with these fables." Quoth she, "It has come to my knowledge, O King, that



### THE THIEF AND HIS MONKEY.

A certain man had a monkey and was a thief, who never entered one of the markets of the city in which he dwelt, but he made off with great purchase. One day, he saw a man offering for sale worn clothes, and he went calling them in the market, but none bid for them, and all to whom he showed them refused to buy of him. Presently, the thief saw him put the clothes in a wrapper and sit down to rest for weariness; so he made the ape sport before him, and whilst he was busy gazing at it, stole the parcel from him. Then he took the ape and made off to a lonely place, where he opened the wrapper and taking out the old clothes, wrapped them in a piece of costly stuff. This he carried to another market and exposed it for sale with what was therein, making it a condition that it should not be opened and tempting the folk with the lowness of the price he set on it. A certain man saw the wrapper and it pleased him; so he bought the parcel on these terms and carried it home, doubting not but he had gotten a prize. When his wife saw it, she said, 'What is this?' And he answered, 'It is precious stuff, that I have bought below its worth, meaning to sell it again and take the profit.' 'O dupe,' rejoined she, 'would this stuff be sold under its value, except it were stolen? Dost thou not know that he who buys a ware, without examining it, erreth? And indeed he is like unto the weaver.' 'What is the story of the weaver?' asked he; and she said, 'I have heard tell that

### THE FOOLISH WEAVER.

There was once in a certain village a weaver who could not earn his living save by excessive toil. One day, it chanced that a rich man of the neighbourhood made a feast and bade the folk thereto. The weaver was present

and saw such as were richly clad served with delicate meats and made much of by the master of the house, for what he saw of their gallant array. So he said in himself, "If I change this my craft for another, easier and better considered and paid, I shall amass store of wealth and buy rich clothes, that so I may rise in rank and be exalted in men's eyes and become like unto these." Presently, one of the mountebanks there climbed up to the top of a steep and lofty wall and threw himself down, alighting on his feet; which when the weaver saw, he said to himself, "Needs must I do as this fellow hath done, for surely I shall not fail of it." So he climbed up on to the wall and casting himself down to the ground, broke his neck and died forthright. I tell thee this (continued the woman) that thou mayst get thy living by that fashion thou knowest and thoroughly understandest, lest greed enter into thee and thou lust after what is not of thy competence.' Quoth he, 'Not every wise man is saved by his wisdom nor is every fool lost by his folly. I have seen a skilful charmer, versed in the ways of serpents, bitten by a snake and killed, and I have known others prevail over serpents, who had no skill in them and no knowledge of their ways.' And he hearkened not to his wife, but went on buying stolen goods below their value, till he fell under suspicion and perished.

#### THE SPARROW AND THE PEACOCK.

There was once a sparrow, that used every day to visit a certain king of the birds and was the first to go in to him and the last to leave him. One day, a company of birds assembled on a high mountain, and one of them said to another, 'Verily, we are waxed many and many are the differences between us, and needs must we have a king to order our affairs, so shall we be at one and our differences will cease.' Thereupon up came the sparrow

and counselled them to make the peacock,—that is, the prince he used to visit,—king over them. So they chose the peacock to their king and he bestowed largesse on them and made the sparrow his secretary and vizier. Now the sparrow was wont bytimes to leave his assiduity [in the personal service of the king] and look into affairs [in general]. One day, he came not at the usual time, whereat the peacock was sore troubled; but presently, he returned and the peacock said to him, ‘What hath delayed thee, that art the nearest to me of all my servants and the dearest?’ Quoth the sparrow, ‘I have seen a thing that is doubtful to me and at which I am affrighted.’ ‘What was it thou sawest?’ asked the king; and the sparrow answered, ‘I saw a man set up a net, hard by my nest, and drive its pegs fast into the ground. Then he strewed grain in its midst and withdrew afar off. As I sat watching what he would do, behold, fate and destiny drove thither a crane and his wife, which fell into the midst of the net and began to cry out; whereupon the fowler came up and took them. This troubled me, and this is the reason of my absence from thee, O king of the age; but never again will I abide in that nest, for fear of the net.’ ‘Depart not thy dwelling,’ rejoined the peacock; ‘for precaution will avail thee nothing against destiny.’ And the sparrow obeyed his commandment, saying, ‘I will take patience and not depart, in obedience to the king.’ So he continued to visit the king and carry him food and water, taking care for himself, till one day he saw two sparrows fighting on the ground and said in himself, ‘How can I, who am the king’s vizier, look on and see sparrows fighting in my neighbourhood? By Allah, I must make peace between them!’ So he flew down to them, to reconcile them; but the fowler cast the net over them and taking the sparrow in question, gave him to his fellow, saying, ‘Take care of him, for he is the fattest and

finest I ever saw.' But the sparrow said in himself, 'I have fallen into that which I feared and it was none but the peacock that inspired me with a false security. It availed me nothing to beware of the stroke of fate, since for him who taketh precaution there is no fleeing from destiny; and how well says the poet :

That which is not to be shall by no means be brought To pass, and that  
which is to be shall come, unsought,  
Even at the time ordained; but he that knoweth not The truth is still  
deceived and finds his hopes grown nought.'

### STORY OF ALI BEN BEKKAR AND SHEMS- ENNEHAR.

There lived once [at Baghdad] in the days of the Khalif <sup>Night</sup> Haroun er Reshid a merchant named Aboulhusn Ali ben <sup>cliff.</sup> Tahir, who was great of goods and grace, handsome and pleasant-mannered, beloved of all. He used to enter the royal palace without asking leave, for all the Khalif's concubines and slave-girls loved him, and he was wont to company with Er Reshid and recite verses to him and tell him witty stories. Withal he sold and bought in the merchants' bazaar, and there used to sit in his shop a youth named Ali ben Bekkar, a descendant of the ancient kings of Persia, who was fair of face and elegant of shape, with rosy cheeks and joined eyebrows, sweet of speech and laughing-lipped, a lover of mirth and gaiety. It chanced one day, as they sat laughing and talking, there came up ten damsels like moons, every one of them accomplished in beauty and symmetry, and amongst them a young lady riding on a mule with housings of brocade and golden stirrups. She was swathed in a veil of fine stuff, with a girdle of gold-embroidered silk, and was even as says the poet :

She hath a skin like very silk and a soft speech and sweet; Gracious to  
all, her words are nor too many nor too few.



**Two eyes she hath, quoth God Most High, "Be," and forthright they were; They work as wine upon the hearts of those whom they ensue.**

**Add to my passion, love of her, each night; and, solacement Of loves, the Resurrection be thy day of rendezvous!**

The lady alighted at Aboulhusn's shop and sitting down there, saluted him, and he returned her salute. When Ali ben Bekkar saw her, she ravished his understanding and he rose to go away; but she said to him, 'Sit in thy place. We came to thee and thou goest away: this is not fair.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'by Allah, I flee from what I see; for the tongue of the case saith:

**She's the sun and her dwelling's in heaven on high; Look, then, to thine heart thou fair patience commend.**

**Thou mayst not climb up to her place in the sky, Nor may she to thee from her heaven descend.'**

When she heard this, she smiled and said to Aboulhusn, 'What is the name of this young man?' 'He is a stranger,' answered he. 'What countryman is he?' asked she, and the merchant replied, 'He is a descendant of the (ancient) kings of Persia; his name is Ali ben Bekkar, and indeed it behoves us to use strangers with honour.' 'When my damsel comes to thee,' rejoined she, 'come thou at once to us and bring him with thee, that we may entertain him in our abode, lest he blame us and say, "There is no hospitality in the people of Baghdad:" for niggardliness is the worst fault that a man can have. Thou hearest what I say to thee and if thou disobey me, thou wilt incur my displeasure and I will never again visit thee or salute thee.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered Aboulhusn; 'God preserve me from thy displeasure, fair lady!' Then she rose and went away, leaving Ali ben Bekkar in a state of bewilderment. Presently, the damsel came and said to the merchant, 'O my lord Aboulhusn, my lady Shemsennehar, the favourite of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er

Reshid, bids thee to her, thee and thy friend, my lord Ali ben Bekkar.' So he rose and taking Ali with him, followed the girl to the Khalif's palace, where she carried them into a chamber and made them sit down. They talked together awhile, till she set trays of food before them, and they ate and washed their hands. Then she brought them wine, and they drank and made merry; after which she bade them rise and carried them into another chamber, vaulted upon four columns and adorned and furnished after the goodliest fashion with various kinds of furniture and decorations, as it were one of the pavilions of Paradise. They were amazed at the rarities they saw and as they were gazing at these marvels, up came ten damsels, like moons, with a proud and graceful gait, dazzling the sight and confounding the wit, and ranged themselves in two ranks, as they were of the houris of Paradise. After awhile, in came ten other damsels, with lutes and other instruments of mirth and music in their hands, who saluted the two guests and sitting down, fell to tuning their instruments. Then they rose and standing before them, played and sang and recited verses: and indeed each one of them was a seduction to the faithful. Whilst they were thus occupied, there entered other ten damsels like unto them, high-bosomed and of an equal age, with black eyes and rosy cheeks, joined eyebrows and languorous looks, a seduction to the faithful and a delight to all who looked upon them, clad in various kinds of coloured silks, with ornaments that amazed the wit. They took up their station at the door, and there succeeded them yet other ten damsels, fairer than they, clad in gorgeous apparel, such as defies description; and they also stationed themselves by the door. Then in came a band of twenty damsels and amongst them the lady Shemsennehar, as she were the moon among the stars, scarved with the luxuriance of her hair and dressed in a blue robe and a veil of silk, em-

broidered with gold and jewels. About her middle she wore a girdle set with various kinds of precious stones, and she advanced with a graceful and coquettish gait, till she came to the couch that stood at the upper end of the chamber and seated herself thereon. When Ali ben Bekkar saw her, he repeated the following couplets :

Yes, this is she indeed, the source of all my ill, For whom with long desire I languish at Love's will.

Near her, I feel my soul on fire and bones worn waste For yearning after her that doth my heart fulfil.

Then said he to Aboulhusn, 'Thou hadst dealt more kindly with me to have forewarned me of these things, that I might have prepared my mind and taken patience to support what hath befallen me;' and he wept and groaned and complained. 'O my brother,' replied Aboulhusn, 'I meant thee nought but good; but I feared to tell thee of this, lest such transport should overcome thee as might hinder thee from foregathering with her and intervene between thee and her: but take courage and be of good heart, for she is well disposed to thee and inclineth to favour thee.' 'What is the lady's name?' asked Ali ben Bekkar. 'She is called Shemsennehar,' answered Aboulhusn; 'she is one of the favourites of the Commander of the Faithful Haroun er Reshid and this is the palace of the Khalifate.' Then Shemsennehar sat gazing upon Ali ben Bekkar's charms and he upon hers, till each was engrossed with love of the other. Presently, she commanded the damsels to sit; so they sat down, each in her place, on a couch before one of the windows, and she bade them sing; whereupon one of them took a lute and sang the following verses :

Twice be the message to my love made known, And take the answer from his lips alone.

To thee, O monarch of the fair, I come And stand, of this my case to make my moan.

O thou my sovereign, dear my heart and life, That in my inmost bosom  
 hast thy throne,  
 Prithee, bestow a kiss upon thy slave ; If not as gift, then even as a loan.  
 I will repay it, (mayst thou never fail ! ) Even as I took it, not a tittle gone.  
 Or, if thou wish for more than thou didst lend, Take and content thee ;  
 it is all thine own.  
 May health's fair garment ever gladden thee, Thee that o'er me the weeds  
 of woe hast thrown !

Her singing charmed Ali ben Bekkar, and he said to her, 'Sing me more of the like of these verses.' So she struck the strings and sang as follows :

By excess of estrangement, beloved mine, Thou hast taught long weeping  
 unto my eyne.  
 O joy of my sight and its desire, O goal of my hopes, my worship's shrine,  
 Have pity on one, whose eyes are drowned In the sorrowful lover's tears  
 of brine !

When she had finished, Shemsennehar said to another damsel, 'Sing us somewhat, thou.' So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses :

His looks 'twas made me drunken, in sooth, and not his wine ; And the  
 grace of his gait has banished sleep from these eyes of mine.  
 'Twas not the wine-cup dazed me, but e'en his glossy curls ; His charms  
 it was that raised me and not the juice o' the vine.  
 His winding browlocks have routed my patience, and my wit Is done  
 away by the beauties his garments do enshrine.<sup>1</sup>

When Shemsennehar heard this, she sighed heavily, and the song pleased her. Then she bade another damsel sing ; so she took the lute and chanted the following :

A face that vies, indeed, with heaven's lamp, the sun ; The welling of  
 youth's springs upon him scarce begun.  
 His curling whiskers write letters wherein the sense Of love in the  
 extreme is writ for every one.  
 Beauty proclaimed of him, whenas with him it met, " A stuff in God's  
 best loom was fashioned forth and done ! "

<sup>1</sup> These verses are full of plays upon words, which it is impossible to render in a translation.



When she had finished, Ali Ben Bekkar said to the damsel nearest him, 'Sing us somewhat, thou.' So she took the lute and sang these verses :

The time of union's all too slight For coquetry and prudish flight.  
Not thus the noble are. How long This deadly distance and despite?  
Ah, profit by the auspicious time, To sip the sweets of love-delight.

Ali ben Bekkar followed up her song with plentiful tears ; and when Shemsennehar saw him weeping and groaning and lamenting, she burned with love-longing and desire and passion and transport consumed her. So she rose from the couch and came to the door of the alcove, where Ali met her and they embraced and fell down a-swoon in the doorway ; whereupon the damsels came to them and carrying them into the alcove, sprinkled rose-water upon them. When they revived, they missed Aboulhusn, who had hidden himself behind a couch, and the young lady said, 'Where is Aboulhusn?' So he showed himself to her from beside the couch, and she saluted him, saying, 'I pray God to give me the means of requiting thee thy kindness !' Then she turned to Ali ben Bekkar and said to him, 'O my lord, passion has not reached this pass with thee, without doing the like with me ; but there is nothing for it but to bear patiently what hath befallen us.' 'By Allah, O my lady,' rejoined he, 'converse with thee may not content me nor gazing upon thee assuage the fire of my heart, nor will the love of thee, that hath mastered my soul, leave me, but with the passing away of my life.' So saying, he wept and the tears ran down upon his cheeks, like unstrung pearls. When Shemsennehar saw him weep, she wept for his weeping ; and Aboulhusn exclaimed, 'By Allah, I wonder at your plight and am confounded at your behaviour ; of a truth, your affair is amazing and your case marvellous. If ye weep thus, what while ye are yet together, how will it be when ye are parted? Indeed, this is no time for

weeping and wailing, but for foregathering and gladness; rejoice, therefore, and make merry and weep no more.' Then Shemsennehar signed to a damsel, who went out and returned with handmaids bearing a table, whereon were silver dishes, full of all manner rich meats. They set the table before them, and Shemsennehar began to eat and to feed Ali ben Bekkar, till they were satisfied, when the table was removed and they washed their hands. Presently the waiting-women brought censers and casting bottles and sprinkled them with rose-water and incensed them with aloes and ambergris and other perfumes; after which they set on dishes of graven gold, containing all manner of sherbets, besides fruits and confections, all that the heart can desire or the eye delight in, and one brought a flagon of cornelian, full of wine. Then Shemsennehar chose out ten handmaids and ten singing-women to attend on them and dismissing the rest to their apartments, bade some of those who remained smite the lute. They did as she bade them and one of them sang the following verses:

My soul be a ransom for him who returned my salute with a smile And  
revived in my breast the longing for union after despair !  
The hands of passion have brought my secret thoughts to the light And  
that which is in my bosom unto my censors laid bare.  
The very tears of my eyes press betwixt me and him, As though they,  
even as I, enamoured of him were.

When she had finished, Shemsennehar rose and filling a cup, drank it off, then filled it again and gave it to Ali ben Bekkar; after which she bade another damsel sing; **Night** and she sang the following verses: **clib.**

My tears, as they flow, are alike to my wine, as I brim it up; For my  
eyes pour forth of their lids the like of what froths in my cup.<sup>1</sup>  
By Allah, I know not, for sure, whether my eyelids it is Run over with  
wine or else of my tears it is that I sup !

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* blood, like wine in colour.

Then Ali ben Bekkar drank off his cup and returned it to Shemsennehar. She filled it again and gave it to Aboulhusn, who drank it off. Then she took the lute, saying, 'None shall sing over my cup but myself.' So she tuned the strings and sang these verses :

The hurrying tears upon his cheeks course down from either eye, For  
very passion, and love's fires within his heart flame high.  
He weeps whilst near to those he loves, for fear lest they depart : So,  
whether near or far they be, his tears are never dry.

And again :

Our lives for thee, O cupbearer, O thou whom beauty's self From the  
bright parting of thy hair doth to the feet array !  
The full moon<sup>1</sup> from thy collar-folds rises, the Pleiades<sup>2</sup> Shine from thy  
mouth and in thine hands there beams the sun of day.<sup>3</sup>  
I trow, the goblets wherewithal thou mak'st us drunk are those Thou  
pourest to us from thine eyes, that lead the wit astray.  
Is it no wonder that thou art a moon for ever full And that thy lovers  
'tis, not thou, that wane and waste away ?  
Art thou a god, that thou, indeed, by favouring whom thou wilt And  
slighting others, canst at once bring back to life and slay ?  
God moulded beauty from thy form and eke perfumed the breeze With  
the sheer sweetness of the scent that cleaves to thee alway.  
None of the people of this world, an angel sure thou art, Whom thy  
Creator hath sent down, to hearten our dismay.

When Ali and Aboulhusn and the bystanders heard Shemsennehar's song, they were transported and laughed and sported ; but while they were thus engaged, up came a damsel, trembling for fear, and said, 'O my lady, Afif and Mesrour and Merjan and others of the Commander of the Faithful's eunuchs, whom I know not, are at the door.' When they heard this they were like to die of fright, but Shemsennehar laughed and said, 'Have no fear.' Then said she to the damsel, 'Hold them in parley, whilst we remove hence.' And she caused shut the doors of the alcove upon Ali and Aboulhusn and drew the curtains over

<sup>1</sup> The face.

<sup>2</sup> The teeth.

<sup>3</sup> The wine-cup.







them; after which she shut the door of the saloon and went out by the privy gate into the garden, where she seated herself on a couch she had there and bade one of the damsels rub her feet. Then she dismissed the rest of her women and bade the portress admit those who were at the door; whereupon Mesrour entered, he and his company, twenty men with drawn swords, and saluted her. Quoth she, 'Wherefore come ye?' And they answered, 'The Commander of the Faithful salutes thee. He wearies for thy sight and would have thee to know that this with him is a day of great joy and gladness and he is minded to seal his gladness with thy present company: wilt thou then go to him or shall he come to thee?' At this she rose, and kissing the earth, said, 'I hear and obey the commandment of the Commander of the Faithful.' Then she summoned the chief (female) officers of her household and other damsels and made a show of complying with the Khalif's orders and commanding them to make preparations for his reception, albeit all was in readiness; and she said to the eunuchs, 'Go to the Commander of the Faithful and tell him that I await him after a little space, that I may make ready for him a place with carpets and so forth.' So they returned in haste to the Khalif, whilst Shemsennehar, doffing her (outer) clothing, repaired to her beloved Ali ben Bekkar and strained him to her bosom and bade him farewell, whereat he wept sore and said, 'O my lady, this leave-taking will lead to the ruin of my soul and the loss of my life; but I pray God to grant me patience to bear this my love, wherewith He hath smitten me!' 'By Allah,' answered she, 'none will suffer perdition but I; for thou wilt go out to the market and company with those that will divert thee, and thine honour will be in safety and thy passion concealed; whilst I shall fall into trouble and weariness nor find any to console me, more by token that I have given the Khalif a rendezvous, wherein haply great

peril shall betide me, by reason of my love and longing passion for thee and my grief at being parted from thee. For with what voice shall I sing and with what heart shall I present me before the Khalif and with what speech shall I entertain the Commander of the Faithful and with what eyes shall I look upon a place where thou art not and take part in a banquet at which thou art not present and with what taste shall I drink wine of which thou partakest not?' 'Be not troubled,' said Aboulhusn, 'but take patience and be not remiss in entertaining the Commander of the Faithful this night, neither show him any neglect, but be of good courage.' At this juncture, up came a damsel, who said to Shemsennehar, 'O my lady, the Khalif's pages are come.' So she rose to her feet and said to the maid, 'Take Aboulhusn and his friend and carry them to the upper gallery giving upon the garden and there leave them, till it be dark; when do thou make shift to carry them forth.' Accordingly, the girl carried them up to the gallery and locking the door upon them, went away. As they sat looking on the garden, the Khalif appeared, preceded by near a hundred eunuchs with drawn swords and compassed about with a score of damsels, as they were moons, holding each a lighted flambeau. They were clad in the richest of raiment and on each one's head was a crown set with diamonds and rubies. The Khalif walked in their midst with a majestic gait, whilst Mesrou and Afif and Wesif went before him and Shemsennehar and all her damsels rose to receive him and meeting him at the garden door, kissed the earth before him; nor did they cease to go before him, till they brought him to the couch, whereon he sat down, whilst all the waiting-women and eunuchs stood before him and there came fair maids and slave-girls with lighted flambeaux and perfumes and essences and instruments of music. Then he bade the singers sit down, each in her room, and Shemsennehar

came up and seating herself on a stool by the Khalif's side, began to converse with him, whilst Ali and the jeweller looked on and listened, unseen of the prince. The Khalif fell to jesting and toying with Shemsennehar and bade throw open the (garden) pavilion. So they opened the doors and windows and lighted the flambeaux till the place shone in the season of darkness even as the day. The eunuchs removed thither the wine-service and (quoth Aboulhusn), 'I saw drinking-vessels and rarities, whose like mine eyes never beheld, vases of gold and silver and all manner precious stones and jewels, such as beggar description, till indeed meseemed I was dreaming, for excess of amazement at what I saw!' But as for Ali ben Bekkar, from the moment Shemsennehar left him, he lay prostrate on the ground for excess of passion and desire; and when he revived, he fell to gazing upon these things, that had not their like, and saying to Aboulhusn, 'O my brother, I fear lest the Khalif see us or come to know of us; but the most of my fear is for thee. For myself, I know that I am surely lost past recourse, and the cause of my destruction is nought but excess of passion and love-longing and desire and separation from my beloved, after union with her; but I beseech God to deliver us from this predicament.' Then they continued to look on, till the banquet was spread before the Khalif, when he turned to one of the damsels and said to her, 'O Gheram, let us hear some of thine enchanting songs.' So she took the lute and tuning it, sang as follows:

The longing of a Bedouin maid, whose folk are far away, Who yearns  
after the willow of the Hejaz and the bay,—  
Whose tears, when she on travellers lights, might for their water serve  
And eke her passion, with its heat, their bivouac-fire purvey,—  
Is not more fierce nor ardent than my longing for my love, Who deem:  
that I commit a crime in loving him alway.

When Shemsennehar heard this, she slipped off the stool



on which she sat and fell to the earth insensible; whereupon the damsels came and lifted her up. When Ali ben Bekkar saw this from the gallery, he also fell down senseless, and Aboulhusn said, 'Verily Fate hath apportioned passion equally between you!' As he spoke, in came the damsel who had brought them thither and said to him, 'O Aboulhusn, arise and come down, thou and thy friend, for of a truth the world is grown strait upon us and I fear lest our case be discovered or the Khalif become aware of you: so, except you descend at once, we are dead folk.' 'How shall this youth descend,' replied he, 'seeing that he hath not strength to rise?' With this she fell to sprinkling rose-water on Ali ben Bekkar, till he came to himself, when Aboulhusn lifted him up and the damsel stayed him. So they went down from the gallery and walked on awhile, till they came to a little iron door, which the damsel opened, and they found themselves on the Tigris' bank. Here they sat down on a stone bench, whilst the girl clapped her hands and there came up a man with a little boat, to whom said she, 'Carry these two young men to the other bank.' So they all three entered the boat and the man put off with them; and as they launched out into the stream, Ali ben Bekkar looked back towards the Khalif's palace and the pavilion and the garden and bade them farewell with these verses:

I stretch forth a feeble hand to bid farewell to thee, With the other upon  
my burning breast, beneath the heart of me.

But be not this the last of the love betwixt us twain And let not this the  
last of my soul's refreshment be.

The damsel said to the boatman, 'Make haste with  
Night them.' So he plied his oars swiftly till they reached the  
11b. opposite bank, where they landed, and she took leave of  
them, saying, 'It were my wish not to leave you, but I can  
go no farther than this.' Then she turned back, whilst  
Ali ben Bekkar lay on the ground before Aboulhusn and

could not rise, till the latter said to him, 'This place is not sure and I am in fear of our lives, by reason of the thieves and highwaymen and men of lawlessness.' With this Ali arose and essayed to walk a little, but could not. Now Aboulhusn had friends in that quarter, so he made for the house of one of them, in whom he trusted and who was of his intimates, and knocked at the door. The man came out quickly and seeing them, bade them welcome and brought them into his house, where he made them sit down and talked with them and asked them whence they came. Quoth Aboulhusn, 'We came out but now, being moved thereto by a man with whom I had dealings and who hath in his hands monies of mine. It was told me that he was minded to flee into foreign countries with my money; so I came out to-night in quest of him, taking with me this my friend Ali ben Bekkar for company; but he hid from us and we could get no speech of him. So we turned back, empty-handed, and knew not whither to go, for it were irksome to us to return home at this hour of the night; wherefore we came to thee, knowing thy wonted courtesy and kindness.' 'Ye are right welcome,' answered the host, and studied to do them honour. They abode with him the rest of the night, and as soon as it was day, they left him and made their way back to the city. When they came to Aboulhusn's house, the latter conjured his friend to enter; so they went in and lying down on the bed, slept awhile. When they awoke, Aboulhusn bade his servants spread the house with rich carpets, saying in himself, 'Needs must I divert this youth and distract him from thoughts of his affliction, for I know his case better than another.' Then he called for water for Ali ben Bekkar, and the latter rose and making his ablutions, prayed the obligatory prayers that he had omitted for the past day and night; after which he sat down and began to solace himself with talk with his

friend. When Aboulhusn saw this, he turned to him and said, 'O my lord, it were better for thy case that thou abide with me this night, so thy heart may be lightened and the anguish of love-longing that is upon thee be dispelled and thou make merry with us and haply the fire of thy heart be allayed.' 'O my brother,' answered Ali, 'do what seemeth good to thee; for I may not anywise escape from what hath befallen me.' Accordingly, Aboulhusn arose and bade his servants summon some of the choicest of his friends and sent for singers and musicians. Meanwhile he made ready meat and drink for them, and they came and sat eating and drinking and making merry till nightfall. Then they lit the candles, and the cups of friendship and good fellowship went round amongst them, and the time passed pleasantly with them. Presently, a singing-woman took the lute and sang the following verses:

**Fate** launched at me a dart, the arrow of an eye; It pierced me and cut off from those I love am I.

**Fortune** hath mauled me sore and patience fails me now; But long have I forebode misfortune drawing nigh.

When Ali ben Bekkar heard this, he fell to the earth in a swoon and abode thus till daybreak, and Aboulhusn despaired of him. But, with the dawning, he came to himself and sought to go home; nor could Aboulhusn deny him, for fear of the issue of his affair. So he made his servants bring a mule and mounting Ali thereon, carried him to his lodging, he and one of his men. When he was safe at home, the merchant thanked God for his deliverance from that peril and sat awhile with him, comforting him; but Ali could not contain himself, for the violence of his passion and love-longing. Presently

**Night** Aboulhusn rose to take leave of him and Ali said, 'O my  
**clbi.** brother, leave me not without news.' 'I hear and obey, answered Aboulhusn, and repairing to his shop, opened it

and sat there all day, expecting news of Shemsennehar; but none came. He passed the night in his own house and when it was day, he went to Ali ben Bekkar's lodging and found him laid on his bed, with his friends about him and physicians feeling his pulse and prescribing this or that. When he saw Aboulhusn, he smiled, and the latter saluting him, enquired how he did and sat with him till the folk withdrew, when he said to him, 'What plight is this?' Quoth Ali, 'It was noised abroad that I was ill and I have no strength to rise and walk, so as to give the lie to the report of my sickness, but continue lying here as thou seest. So my friends heard of me and came to visit me. But, O my brother, hast thou seen the damsel or heard any news of her?' 'I have not seen her,' answered Aboulhusn, 'since we parted from her on the Tigris' bank; but, O my brother, beware of scandal and leave this weeping.' 'O my brother,' rejoined Ali, 'indeed, I have no control over myself;' and he sighed and recited the following verses :

She giveth unto her hand that whereof mine doth fail, A dye on the wrist, wherewith she doth my patience assail.

She standeth in fear for her hand of the arrows she shoots from her eyes; So, for protection, she's fain to clothe it in armour of mail.<sup>1</sup>

The doctor in ignorance felt my pulse, and I said to him, "Leave thou my hand alone; my heart it is that doth ail."

Quoth she to the dream of the night, that visited me and fled, "By Allah, describe him to me and bate me no jot of the tale!"

It answered, "I put him away, though he perish of thirst, and said, 'Stand off from the watering-place!' So he could not to drink avail."

She poured forth the pearls of her tears from her eyes' narcissus and gave The rose of her cheeks to drink and bit upon jujubes<sup>2</sup> with hail.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the Eastern practice of dying the hands with henna in concentric bands.

<sup>2</sup> The lips, likened to the plum of the jujube-tree.      <sup>3</sup> The teeth.



Then he said, 'O Aboulhusn, I am smitten with an affliction, from which I deemed myself in surety, and there is no greater ease for me than death.' 'Be patient,' answered his friend: 'peradventure God will heal thee.' Then he went out from him and repairing to his shop, opened it, nor had he sat long, when up came Shemsennehar's handmaid, who saluted him. He returned her salute and looking at her, saw that her heart was palpitating and that she was troubled and bore the traces of affliction: so he said to her, 'Thou art welcome. How is it with Shemsennehar?' 'I will tell thee,' answered she; 'but first tell me how doth Ali ben Bekkar.' So he told her all that had passed, whereat she was grieved and sighed and lamented and marvelled at his case. Then said she, 'My lady's case is still stranger than this; for when you went away, I turned back, troubled at heart for you and hardly crediting your escape, and found her lying prostrate in the pavilion, speaking not nor answering any, whilst the Commander of the Faithful sat by her head, unknowing what ailed her and finding none who could give him news of her. She ceased not from her swoon till midnight, when she revived and the Khalif said to her, "What ails thee, O Shemsennehar, and what has befallen thee this night?" "May God make me thy ransom, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered she. "Verily, bile rose in me and lighted a fire in my body, so that I lost my senses for excess of pain, and I know no more." "What hast thou eaten to-day?" asked the Khalif. Quoth she, "I broke my fast on something I had never before eaten." Then she feigned to be recovered and calling for wine, drank it and begged the Khalif to resume his diversion. So he sat down again on his couch in the pavilion and made her sit as before. When she saw me, she asked me how you fared; so I told her what I had done with you and repeated to her the verses that Ali ben Bekkar had recited at parting,

whereat she wept secretly, but presently stinted. After awhile, the Khalif ordered a damsel to sing, and she chanted the following verses :

Life, as I live, has not been sweet since I did part from thee ; Would  
 God I knew but how it fared with thee too after me !  
 If thou be weeping tears of brine for sev'rance of our loves, Ah, then,  
 indeed, 'twere meet my tears of very blood should be.

When my lady heard this, she fell back on the sofa in a swoon, and I seized her hand and sprinkled rose-water on her face, till she revived, when I said to her, "O my lady, do not bring ruin on thyself and on all thy household, but be patient, by the life of thy beloved !" "Can aught befall me worse than death ?" answered she. "That, indeed, I long for, for, by Allah, my ease is therein." Whilst we were talking, another damsel sang the following words of the poet :

"Patience shall peradventure lead to solacement," quoth they ; and I,  
 "Where's patience to be had, now he is gone away ?"  
 He made a binding covenant with me to cut the cords Of patience, when  
 we two embraced upon the parting day.

When Shemsennehar heard this, she swooned away once more, which when the Khalif saw, he came to her in haste and commanded the wine-service to be removed and each damsel to return to her chamber. He abode with her the rest of the night, and when it was day, he sent for physicians and men of art and bade them medicine her, knowing not that her sickness arose from passion and love-longing. He tarried with her till he deemed her in a way of recovery, when he returned to his palace, sore concerned for her illness, and she bade me go to thee and bring her news of Ali ben Bekkar. So I came, leaving with her a number of her bodywomen ; and this is what has delayed me from thee.' When Aboulhusn heard her story, he marvelled and said, 'By Allah, I have acquainted thee with his whole case ; so now return to thy mistress ;

salute her for me and exhort her to patience and secrecy and tell her that I know it to be a hard matter and one that calls for prudent ordering.' She thanked him and taking leave of him, returned to her mistress, whilst he abode in his place till the end of the day, when he shut the shop and betaking himself to Ali ben Bekkar's house, knocked at the door. One of the servants came out and admitted him; and when Ali saw him, he smiled and rejoiced in his coming, saying, 'O Aboulhusn, thou hast made a weary man of me by thine absence from me this day; for indeed my soul is pledged to thee for the rest of my days.' 'Leave this talk,' answered the other. 'Were thy healing at the price of my hand, I would cut it off, ere thou couldst ask me; and could I ransom thee with my life, I had already laid it down for thee. This very day, Shemsennehar's handmaid has been with me and told me that what hindered her from coming before this was the Khalif's sojourn with her mistress;' and he went on to repeat to him all that the girl had told him of Shemsennehar; at which Ali lamented sore and wept and said to him, 'O my brother, I conjure thee by God to help me in this mine affliction and teach me how I shall do! Moreover, I beg thee of thy grace to abide with me this night, that I may have the solace of thy company.' Aboulhusn agreed to this; so they talked together till the night darkened, when Ali groaned aloud and lamented and wept copious tears, reciting the following verses:

My eye holds thine image ever; thy name in my mouth is aye And still  
in my heart is thy sojourn; so how canst thou absent be?  
How sore is my lamentation for life that passes away Nor is there, alas!  
in union a part for thee and me!

And also these:

She cleft with the sword of her glance the helm of my courage in two  
And the mail of my patience she pierced with the spear of her shape  
through and through.

**She** unveiled to us, under the musk of the mole that is set on her cheek,  
A camphor-white dawning a-break through a night of the amber-  
gris' hue.<sup>1</sup>

**Her** spirit was stirred to chagrin and she bit on cornelian<sup>2</sup> with pearls,<sup>3</sup>  
Whose unions unvalued abide in a lakelet of sugary dew.

**She** sighed for impatience and smote with her palm on the snows of her  
breast. Her hand left a scar ; so I saw what never before met my  
view ;

**Pens** fashioned of coral (her nails), that, dinting the book of her breast,  
Five lines, scored in ambergris ink, on a table of crystal drew.

**O ye** that go girded with steel, O swordsmen, I rede you beware Of the  
stroke of her death-dealing eyes, that never looked yet but they  
slew !

**And** guard yourselves, ye of the spears, and fence off her thrust from  
your hearts, If she tilt with the quivering lance of her shape straight  
and slender at you.

Then he gave a great cry and fell down in a swoon. Aboulhusn thought that his soul had departed his body and he ceased not from his swoon till daybreak, when he came to himself and talked with his friend, who sat with him till the forenoon. Then he left him and repaired to his shop. Hardly had he opened it, when the damsel came and stood before him. As soon as he saw her, she made a sign of salutation to him, which he returned ; and she greeted him for her mistress, saying, 'How doth Ali ben Bekkar?' 'O good damsel,' replied he, 'ask me not how he doth nor what he suffers for excess of passion ; for he sleeps not by night neither rests by day ; wakefulness wasteth him and affliction hath gotten the mastery of him and his case is distressful to his friend.' Quoth she, 'My lady salutes thee and him, and indeed she is in worse case than he. She hath written him a letter and here it is. When she gave it me, she said to me, "Do not return save with the answer." So wilt thou go with me

<sup>1</sup> A well-known metaphor for the brilliant whiteness of the face shining through the black hair.

<sup>2</sup> The lips.

<sup>3</sup> The teeth.



to him and get his reply?' 'I hear and obey,' answered Aboulhusn, and shutting his shop, carried her, by a different way to that by which he came, to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where he left her standing at the door and entered. **N**ight elbit. When Ali saw him, he rejoiced, and Aboulhusn said to him, 'The reason of my coming is that such an one hath sent his handmaid to thee with a letter, containing his greeting to thee and excusing himself for that he hath tarried by reason of a certain matter that hath betided him. The girl stands even now at the door: shall she have leave to enter?' And he signed to him that it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl. Ali understood his sign and answered, 'Bring her in.' So she entered and when he saw her, he shook for joy and signed to her, as who should say, 'How doth thy lord, may God grant him health and recovery!' 'He is well,' answered she and pulling out the letter, gave it to him. He took it and kissing it, opened and read it; after which he handed it to Aboulhusn, who found written therein what follows:

**'The messenger of me will give thee news aright; So let his true report suffice thee for my sight.**

**A lover hast thou left, for love of thee distraught; Her eyes cease nevermore from watching, day or night.**

**I brace myself to bear affliction, for to foil The buffets of ill-fate is given to no wight.**

**But be thou of good cheer; for never shall my heart Forget thee nor thy thought be absent from my spright.**

**Look on thy wasted frame and what is fallen thereon And thence infer of me and argue of my plight.**

To proceed: I have written thee a letter without fingers and speak to thee without tongue; to tell thee my whole state, I have an eye from which sleeplessness is never absent and a heart whence sorrowful thought stirs not. It is with me as I had never known health nor let sadness, neither beheld a fair face nor spent an hour of pleasant life; but it is as I were made up of love-longing

and of the pain of passion and chagrin. Sickness is unceasing upon me and my yearning redoubles ever; desire increases still and longing rages in my heart. I pray God to hasten our union and dispel the trouble of my mind: and I would fain have thee write me some words, that I may solace myself withal. Moreover, I would have thee put on a becoming patience, till God give relief; and peace be on thee.' When Ali ben Bekkar had read this letter, he said, 'With what hand shall I write and with what tongue shall I make moan and lament? Indeed, she addeth sickness to my sickness and draweth death upon my death!' Then he sat up and taking inkhorn and paper, wrote the following reply: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. O my lady, thy letter hath reached me and hath given ease to a mind worn out with passion and desire and brought healing to a wounded heart, cankered with languishment and sickness; for indeed I am become even as saith the poet:

Bosom contracted and grievous thought dilated, Eyes ever wakeful and  
body wearied aye;  
Patience cut off and separation ever present, Reason disordered and  
heart all stolen away.

Know that complaining quenches not the fire of calamity; but it eases him whom love-longing consumes and separation destroys; and so I comfort myself with the mention of the word "union;" for how well saith the poet:

If love had not pain and pleasure, satisfaction and despite, Where of  
messengers and letters were for lovers the delight?'

When he had made an end of this letter, he gave it to Aboulhusn, saying, 'Read it and give it to the damsel.' So he took it and read it and its words stirred his soul and its meaning wounded his vitals. Then he gave it to the girl, and Ali said to her, 'Salute thy lady for me and tell her of my passion and longing and how love is blent

with my flesh and my bones ; and say to her that I need one who shall deliver me from the sea of destruction and save me from this dilemma ; for of a truth fortune oppresses me with its vicissitudes ; and is there any helper to free me from its defilements ?' So saying, he wept and the damsel wept for his weeping. Then she took leave of him and Aboulhusn went out with her and bade her farewell. So she went her way and he returned to his shop, which he opened, and sat down there, according to his wont ; but as he sat, he found his bosom straitened and his heart oppressed and was troubled about his case. He ceased not from melancholy thought the rest of that day and night, and on the morrow he betook himself to Ali ben Bekkar, with whom he sat till the folk withdrew, when he asked him how he did. Ali began to complain of passion and descant upon the longing and distraction that possessed him, ending by repeating the following words of the poet :

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Folk have made moan of passion before me of past years, And live and dead for absence have suffered pains and fears ;  
But what within my bosom I harbour, with mine eyes I've never seen the like of nor heard it with mine ears.

And also these :

I've suffered for thy love what Cals, that madman<sup>1</sup> hight, Did never undergo for love of Leila bright.  
Yet chase I not the beasts o' the desert, as did he ; For madness hath its kinds for this and th' other wight.

Quoth Aboulhusn, ' Never did I see or hear of one like unto thee in thy love ! If thou sufferest all this transport and sickness and trouble, being enamoured of one who returns thy passion, how would it be with thee, if she whom thou lovest were contrary and perfidious ? Me-seems, thy case will be discovered, if thou abide thus.'

<sup>1</sup> Mejnoun, the well-known lover of Eastern romance.

His words pleased Ali ben Bekkar and he trusted in him and thanked him.

Now Aboulhusn had a friend, to whom he had discovered his affair and that of Ali ben Bekkar and who knew that they were close friends; but none other than he was acquainted with what was betwixt them. He was wont to come to him and enquire how Ali did and after a little, he began to ask about the damsel; but Aboulhusn put him off, saying, 'She invited him to her and there was between him and her what passeth words, and this is the end of their affair; but I have devised me a plan which I would fain submit to thy judgment.' 'And what is that?' asked his friend. 'O my brother,' answered Aboulhusn, 'I am a man well known, having much dealing among the notables, both men and women, and I fear lest the affair of these twain get wind and this lead to my death and the seizure of my goods and the ruin of my repute and that of my family. Wherefore I purpose to get together my property and make ready forthright and repair to the city of Bassora and abide there, till I see what comes of their affair, that none may know of me, for passion hath mastered them and letters pass between them. Their go-between and confidant at this present is a slave-girl, who hath till now kept their counsel, but I fear lest haply she be vexed with them or anxiety get the better of her and she discover their case to some one and the matter be noised abroad and prove the cause of my ruin; for I have no excuse before God or man.' 'Thou acquaintest me with a perilous matter,' rejoined his friend, 'and one from the like of which the wise and understanding will shrink in affright. May God preserve thee and avert from thee the evil thou darest! Assuredly, thy resolve is a wise one.' So Aboulhusn returned home and betook himself to setting his affairs in order and preparing for his journey; nor had three days elapsed ere he made an end of his business and



departed for Bassora. Three days after, his friend came to visit him, but finding him not, asked the neighbours of him; and they answered, 'He set out three days ago for Bassora, for he had dealings with merchants there and is gone thither to collect his debts; but he will soon return.' The man was confounded at the news and knew not whither to go; and he said in himself, 'Would I had not parted with Aboulhusn!' Then he bethought him how he should gain access to Ali ben Bekkar and repairing to the latter's lodging, said to one of his servants, 'Ask leave for me of thy master that I may go in and salute him.' So the servant went in and told his master and presently returning, invited the man to enter. So he went in and found Ali ben Bekkar lying back on the pillow and saluted him. Ali returned his greeting and bade him welcome; whereupon the other began to excuse himself for having held aloof from him all this while and added, 'O my lord, there was a close friendship between Aboulhusn and myself, so that I used to trust him with my secrets and could not brook to be severed from him an hour. It chanced but now that I was absent three days' space on certain business with a company of my friends, and when I came back, I found his shop shut; so I asked the neighbours of him and they replied, "He is gone to Bassora." Now I know he had no surer friend than thou; so I conjure thee, by Allah, to tell me what thou knowest of him.' When Ali heard this, his colour changed and he was troubled and answered, 'I never heard of his departure till this day, and if it be as thou sayest, weariness is come upon me.' And he repeated the following verses:

Whilom I wept for what was past of joy and pleasant cheer, Whilst yet  
the objects of my love were unremoved and near;  
But now my sad and sorry fate hath sundered me and them And I  
to-day must weep for those that were to me most dear.

Then he bent his head awhile in thought and presently

raising it, said to one of his servants, 'Go to Aboulhusn's house and enquire whether he be at home or gone on a journey. If they say, "He is abroad;" ask whither.' The servant went out and presently returning, said to his master, 'When I asked after Aboulhusn, his people told me that he was gone on a journey to Bassora; but I saw a damsel standing at the door, who knew me, though I knew her not, and said to me, "Art thou not servant to Ali ben Bekkar?" "Yes," answered I. And she said, "I have a message for him from one who is the dearest of all folk to him." So she came with me and is now at the door.' Quoth Ali, 'Bring her in.' So the servant went out and brought her in, and the man who was with Ali ben Bekkar looked at her and found her comely. She came up to Ali and saluting him, talked with him privily; and he from time to time exclaimed with an oath and swore that he had not done as she avouched. Then she took leave of him and went away. When she was gone, Aboulhusn's friend, who was a jeweller, took occasion to speak and said to Ali ben Bekkar, 'Doubtless, the women of the palace have some claim upon thee or thou hast dealings with the Khalif's household?' 'Who told thee of this?' asked Ali. 'I know it by yonder damsel,' replied the jeweller, 'who is Shemsennehar's slave-girl; for she came to me awhile since with a written order for a necklace of jewels; and I sent her a costly one.' When Ali heard this, he was greatly troubled, so that the jeweller feared for his life, but after awhile he recovered himself and said, 'O my brother, I conjure thee by Allah to tell me truly how thou knowest her.' 'Do not press me as to this,' replied the other; and Ali said, 'Indeed, I will not desist from thee till thou tell me the truth.' 'Then,' said the jeweller, 'I will tell thee all, that thou mayst not distrust me nor be alarmed at what I said, nor will I conceal aught from thee, but will discover to thee the truth of the

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matter, on condition that thou possess me with the true state of thy case and the cause of thy sickness.' Then he told him all that had passed between Aboulhusn and himself, adding that he had acted thus only out of friendship for him and of his desire to serve him and assuring him that he would keep his secret and venture life and goods in his service. So Ali in turn told him his story and added, 'By Allah, O my brother, nought moved me to keep my case secret from thee and others but my fear lest the folk should lift the veils of protection from certain persons.' 'And I,' rejoined the jeweller, 'desired not to foregather with thee but of the great affection I bear thee and my zeal for thee in every case and my compassion for the anguish thy heart endureth for severance. Haply, I may be a comforter to thee in the room of my friend Aboulhusn, during his absence. So take heart and be of good cheer.' Ali thanked him and repeated the following verses :

If, 'I am patient,' I say, since forth from me he went, My tears give me the lie and the stress of my lament.

And how shall I hide the tears, that flow in streams adown The table of my cheek for his evanishment?

Then he was silent awhile, and presently said to the jeweller, 'Knowest thou what the girl whispered to me?' 'Not I, by Allah, O my lord,' answered he. Quoth Ali, 'She would have it that I had counselled Aboulhusn to go to Bassora and that I had used this device to put a stop to our correspondence and intercourse. I swore to her that this was not so: but she would not credit me and went away to her mistress, persisting in her injurious suspicions; and indeed I know not what I shall do without Aboulhusn, for she inclined to him and gave ear to his word.' 'O my brother,' answered the jeweller, 'I guessed as much from her manner; but, if it please God the Most High, I will help thee to thy desire.' 'Who can help me,'

rejoined Ali, 'and how wilt thou do with her, when she takes umbrage like a wilding of the desert?' 'By Allah,' exclaimed the jeweller, 'needs must I do my utmost endeavour to help thee and contrive to make her acquaintance, without exposure or mischief!' Then he asked leave to depart, and Ali said, 'O my brother, see thou keep my counsel.' And he looked at him and wept. The jeweller bade him farewell and went away, knowing not what he should do to further his wishes; but as he went along, Night  
clxi. pondering the matter, he spied a letter lying in the road, and taking it up, found that it bore the following superscription, 'From the least worthy of lovers to the most excellent of beloved ones.' He opened it and found these words written therein :

'The messenger brought me a promise of union and delight ; But yet that he had mistaken 'twas constant in my spright.  
Wherefore I joyed not : but sorrow was added unto me, For that I knew my envoy had read thee not aright.

To proceed : Know, O my lord, that I am ignorant of the cause of the breaking off of the correspondence between thee and me : but if it arise from cruelty on thy part, I will meet it with fidelity, and if love have departed from thee, I will remain constant to my love in absence ; for I am with thee even as says the poet :

Be haughty and I will be patient ; capricious, I'll bear ; turn away, I'll draw near thee ; be harsh, I'll be abject ; command, I'll give ear and obey.

As he was reading, up came the slave-girl, looking right and left, and seeing the letter in the jeweller's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, this letter is one I let fall.' He made her no answer, but walked on, and she followed him, till he came to his house, when he entered and she after him, saying, 'O my lord, give me back the letter, for it fell from me.' He turned to her and said, 'O good slave-girl, fear not, neither grieve, for verily God the Protector loves



to protect [His creatures]; but tell me the truth of thy case, for I am one who keepeth counsel. I conjure thee by an oath to hide from me nothing of thy lady's affair; for haply God shall help me to further her wishes and make easy what is hard by my hand.' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'indeed a secret is not lost whereof thou art the keeper; nor shall any affair come to nought for which thou strivest. Know that my heart inclines to thee, and do thou give me the letter.' Then she told him the whole story, adding, 'God is witness to what I say.' 'Thou hast spoken truly,' said the jeweller, 'for I am acquainted with the root of the matter.' Then he told her how he had come by Ali ben Bekkar's secret and related to her all that had passed, whereat she rejoiced; and they agreed that she should carry the letter to Ali and return and tell the jeweller all that passed. Accordingly he gave her the letter and she took it and sealed it up as it was before, saying, 'My mistress Shemsennehar gave it to me sealed; and when he hath read it and given me the reply, I will bring it to thee.' Then she repaired to Ali ben Bekkar, whom she found waiting, and gave him the letter. He read it and writing an answer, gave it to the damsel. She carried it to the jeweller, who broke the seal and read what was written therein, as follows:

'Neglected are our messages, for lo, our go-between, That wont to keep our counsel erst, is wroth with us, I ween.

So choose us out a messenger, a true and trusty wight, Yea, one of whom fidelity, not falsehood, is well seen.

To proceed: Verily, I have not entered upon perfidy nor left fidelity; I have not used cruelty, neither have I put off loyalty nor broken faith. I have not ceased from affection nor severed myself from grief; neither have I found aught after separation but misery and ruin. I know nothing of that thou avouchest nor do I love aught but that which thou lovest. By Him who knoweth the secret

of the hidden things, I have no desire but to be united with her whom I love and my one business is the concealment of my passion, though sickness consume me. This is the exposition of my case and peace be on thee.' When the jeweller read this letter, he wept sore and the girl said to him, 'Leave not this place, till I return to thee; for he suspects me of such and such things, in which he is excusable; so it is my desire to bring thee in company with my mistress Shemsennehar, howsoever I may contrive it. I left her prostrate, awaiting my return with the answer.' Then she went away and the jeweller passed the night in a state of agitation. On the morrow he prayed the morning prayer and sat awaiting the girl's coming. Presently she came in to him, rejoicing, and he said to her, 'What news, O damsel?' Quoth she, 'I gave my mistress Ali ben Bekkar's reply, and when she read it, she was troubled in her mind; but I said to her, "O my lady, have no fear of the hindrance of your affair by reason of Aboulhusn's absence, for I have found one to take his place, better than he and more of worth and apt to keep secrets." Then I told her what was between Aboulhusn and thyself and how thou camest by his confidence and that of Ali ben Bekkar and how I met with thee and showed her how matters stood betwixt thee and me. Now she is minded to have speech of thee, that she may be assured by thy words of the covenants between thee and him; so do thou make ready to go with me to her forthwith.' When the jeweller heard the girl's words, he saw that what she proposed was a grave matter and a great peril, not lightly to be undertaken or entered upon, and said to her, 'O my sister, verily, I am of the common people and not like unto Aboulhusn; for he was of high rank and repute and was wont to frequent the Khalif's household, because of their need of his wares. As for me, he used to talk with me, and I trembled before him the while. So, if thy mis

tress would have speech of me, it must be in some place other than the Khalif's palace and far from the abode of the Commander of the Faithful; for my reason will not let me do what thou proposest.' Accordingly, he refused to go with her, and she went on to assure him of impunity, saying, 'Fear not,' and pressed him, till he consented to accompany her; but, when he would have risen, his legs bent under him and his hands trembled and he exclaimed, 'God forbid that I should go with thee! Indeed, I cannot do this.' 'Reassure thyself,' answered she; 'if it irk thee to go to the Khalif's palace and thou canst not muster up courage to accompany me, I will make her come to thee; so stir not from thy place till I return to thee with her.' Then she went away and returning after a little, said to the jeweller, 'Look that there be with thee neither slave-girl nor man-slave nor any other.' Quoth he, 'I have but an old negress-slave, who waits on me.' So she locked the door between the jeweller and his negress and sent his man-servants out of the house, after which she went out and presently returned, followed by a lady, who filled the house with the sweet scent of her perfumes. When the jeweller saw her, he sprang to his feet and set her a couch and a cushion, and she sat down. He seated himself before her and she abode awhile without speaking, till she was rested, when she unveiled her face and it seemed to the jeweller as if the sun had risen in his house. Then said she to her slave-girl, 'Is this the man of whom thou spakest to me?' 'Yes,' answered she; whereupon the lady turned to the jeweller and said to him, 'How is it with thee?' 'Well,' replied he. 'May God preserve thy life and that of the Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth she, 'Thou hast moved us to come to thee and possess thee with our secret.' Then she questioned him of his household and family; and he discovered to her all his circumstance and said to her, 'I have another house, which I have set



apart for entertaining my friends and brethren, and there is none there save the old negress, of whom I spoke to thy handmaid.' She asked him how he came first to know of the matter and what had made Aboulhusn absent himself; so he told her all and she bewailed the loss of Aboulhusn and said to the jeweller, 'Know that the minds of men are at one in desires, and however they may differ in estate, men are still men and have need one of the other: an affair is not accomplished without speech nor is a wish fulfilled save by endeavour: ease comes not but after weariness nor is succour compassed save by the help of the generous. Night  
clxii.

Now I have trusted my secret to thee and it is in thy power to expose or shield us; I say no more, because of thy generosity of nature. Thou knowest that this my handmaid keeps my counsel and is therefore in high favour with me and I have chosen her to transact my affairs of importance. So let none be worthier in thy sight than she and acquaint her with thine affair. Be of good cheer, for thou art safe from what thou fearest on our account, and there is no shut place but she shall open it to thee. She shall bring thee messages from me to Ali ben Bekkar, and thou shalt be our go-between.' So saying, she rose, scarcely able to stand, and the jeweller forewent her to the door of the house, after which he returned and sat down again in his place, having seen of her beauty what dazzled him and heard of her speech what confounded his wit and witnessed of her grace and courtesy what bewitched him. He sat musing on her perfections till his trouble subsided, when he called for food and ate enough to stay his stomach. Then he changed his clothes and repairing to Ali ben Bekkar's house, knocked at the door. The servants hastened to admit him and brought him to their master, whom he found laid upon his bed. When he saw the jeweller, he said to him, 'Thou hast tarried long from me and hast added concern to my concern.' Then he dismissed his



servants and bade shut the doors, after which he said to the jeweller, 'By Allah, O my brother, I have not closed my eyes since I saw thee last; for the slave-girl came to me yesterday with a sealed letter from her mistress Shemsennehar;' and went on to tell him all that had passed, adding, 'Indeed, I am perplexed concerning mine affair and my patience fails me: for Aboulhusn was of comfort to me, because he knew the girl.' When the jeweller heard this, he laughed and Ali said, 'Why dost thou laugh at my words, thou in whom I rejoiced and to whom I looked for succour against the shifts of fortune?' Then he sighed and wept and repeated the following verses:

Many an one laughs at my weeping, whenas he looks on my pain. Had  
 he but suffered as I have, he, also, to weep would be fain.  
 No one hath ruth on the smitten, for that he is doomed to endure, But  
 he who alike is afflicted and long in affliction hath lain.  
 My passion, my yearning, my sighing, my care and distraction and woe Are  
 all for a loved one, whose dwelling is in my heart's innermost fane.  
 He made his abode in my bosom and never will leave it again; And yet  
 with my love to foregather I weary and travail in vain.  
 I know of no friend I can choose me to stand in his stead unto me, Nor  
 ever, save him, a companion, to cherish and love have I ta'en.<sup>1</sup>

When the jeweller heard this, he wept also and told him all that had passed betwixt himself and the slave-girl and her mistress, since he left him, whilst Ali gave ear to his speech, and at every fresh word his colour shifted 'twixt white and red and his body grew now stronger and now weaker, till he came to the end of his tale, when Ali wept and said to him, 'O my brother, I am a lost man in any event. Would my end were near, that I might be at rest from all this! But I beg thee, of thy favour, to be my helper and comforter in all my affairs, till God accomplish

<sup>1</sup> These verses apparently relate to Aboulhusn, but it is possible that they may be meant to refer to Shemsennehar, as the masculine is constantly used for the feminine in Oriental love-poetry.

His will; and I will not gainsay thee in aught.' Quoth the jeweller, 'Nothing will quench the fire of thy passion save union with her whom thou lovest: and this must not be in this perilous place, but in a house of mine other than in which the girl and her mistress came to me. This place she chose for herself, to the intent that ye may there foregather and complain one to the other of what you have suffered from the pangs of love.' 'O my lord,' answered Ali ben Bekkar, 'do as thou wilt and may God requite thee for me! What thou deemest fit will be right: but be not long about it, lest I die of this anguish.' So I abode with him (quoth the jeweller) that night, entertaining him with converse, till daybreak, when I prayed the morning prayers and going out from him, returned to my house. Night  
clxiii.  
Hardly had I done so, when the damsel came up and saluted me. I returned her greeting and told her what had passed between Ali ben Bekkar and myself; and she said, 'Know that the Khalif has left us and there is none in our lodging, and it is safer for us and better.' 'True,' replied I; 'yet it is not like my house yonder, which is both surer and fitter for us.' 'Be it as thou wilt,' rejoined she. 'I will go to my lady and tell her what thou sayest.' So she went away and presently returned and said to me, 'It is to be as thou sayest: so make us ready the place and expect us.' Then she took out a purse of dinars and said to me, 'My lady salutes thee and bids thee take this and provide therewith what the case calls for.' But I swore that I would have nought of it; so she took the purse and returning to her mistress, said to her, 'He would not take the money, but gave it back to me.' 'No matter,' answered Shemsennehar. As soon as she was gone, I betook myself to my other house and transported thither all that was needful, by way of furniture and utensils and rich carpets and vessels of china and glass and gold and silver, and made ready meat and drink for the occasion.

When the damsel came and saw what I had done, it pleased her and she bade me fetch Ali ben Bekkar; but I said, 'None shall fetch him but thou.' Accordingly she went to him and brought him back, dressed to perfection and looking his best. I met him and welcomed him and making him sit down on a couch befitting his condition, set before him sweet-scented flowers in vases of china and crystal of various colours. Then I set on a tray of vari-coloured meats, of such as rejoice the heart with their sight, and sat talking with him and diverting him, whilst the girl went away and was absent till after sundown, when she returned with Shemsennehar, attended by two maids and no more. When Ali saw her, he rose and embraced her and they both fell down in a swoon. They lay awhile insensible, then, coming to themselves, began to complain to each other of the pains of separation. They sat awhile, conversing with eloquence and tenderness, after which they perfumed themselves and fell to thanking me for what I had done. Said I, 'Have ye a mind for food?' 'Yes,' answered they. So I set food before them, and they ate till they were satisfied and washed their hands, after which I carried them to another room and brought them wine. So they drank and grew merry with wine and inclined to one another, and Shemsennehar said to me, 'O my lord, complete thy kindness by bringing us a lute or other instrument of music that the measure of our joy may be filled.' 'On my head and eyes,' answered I and rising, brought her a lute. She took it and tuned it, then laying it in her lap, made masterly music, at once exciting to sorrowful thoughts and cheering the afflicted; after which she sang the following verses:

I wake and I watch till it seemeth as I were in love with unrest And I  
waste and I languish, as sickness, meseemeth, were born in my breast.  
The tides of my tears, ever flowing, have burnt up my cheeks with their  
heat: Would I knew if our loves, after sev'rance, with union again  
will be blest!



She went on to sing song after song, choice words set to various airs, till our minds were bewitched and it seemed as if the very room would dance with excess of pleasure for the marvel of her sweet singing and there was nor thought nor reason left in us. When we had sat awhile and the cup had gone round amongst us, the damsel took the lute and sang the following verses to a lively measure :

My love a visit promised me and did fulfil his plight One night that I  
shall reckon aye for many and many a night.  
O night of raptures that the fates vouchsafed unto us twain ; Unheeded  
of the railing tribe and in the spies' despite !  
My loved one lay the night with me and I of my content Clipped him  
with my left hand, while he embraced me with his right.  
I strained him to my breast and drank his lips' sweet wine, what while  
I of the honey and of him who sells it had delight.

Whilst we were thus drowned in the sea of gladness, in came a little maid, trembling, and said, 'O my lady, look how you may go away, for the folk are upon us and have surrounded the house, and we know not the cause of this.' When I heard this, I arose in affright, and behold, in came a slave-girl, who said, 'Calamity hath overtaken you !' At the same moment, the door was burst open and there rushed in upon us half a score masked men, with poniards in their hands and swords by their sides, and as many more behind them. When I saw this, the world, for all its wideness, was straitened on me and I looked to the door, but saw no way out ; so I sprang (from the roof) into the house of one of my neighbours and hid myself there. Thence I heard a great uproar in my house and concluded that the Khalif had gotten wind of us and sent the chief of the police to seize us and bring us before him. So I abode confounded and remained in my place, without daring to move, till midnight, when the master of the house became aware of me and being greatly affrighted, made at me with a drawn sword in his hand, saying, 'Who



is this in my house?' Quoth I, 'I am thy neighbour, the jeweller;' and he knew me and held his hand. Then he fetched a light and coming up to me, said, 'O my brother, indeed that which hath befallen thee this night is grievous to me.' 'O my brother,' answered I, 'tell me who it was entered my house and broke in the door, for I fled to thee, not knowing what was the matter.' Quoth he, 'The robbers, who visited our neighbours yesterday and slew such an one and took his goods, saw thee yesterday bringing hither furniture and what not; so they broke in upon thee and stole thy goods and slew thy guests.' Then we arose, he and I, and repaired to my house, which I found empty and stripped of everything, whereat I was confounded and said to myself, 'I care not for the loss of the gear, though indeed I borrowed part thereof of my friends; yet is there no harm in that, for they know my excuse in the loss of my goods and the pillage of my house; but as for Ali ben Bekkar and the Khalif's favourite, I fear lest their case get wind and this cause the loss of my life.' So I turned to my neighbour and said to him, 'Thou art my brother and my neighbour and wilt cover my nakedness; what dost thou counsel me to do?' 'I counsel thee to wait,' answered he; 'for they who entered thy house and stole thy goods have murdered the better part of a company from the Khalif's palace, besides some of the police, and the Khalif's officers are now in quest of them on every side. Haply they will chance on them and so thy wish will come about without effort of thine.' Then I returned to my other house, that in which I dwelt, saying to myself, 'This that hath befallen me is what Aboulhusn feared and  
**Night** from which he fled to Bassora.' Presently the pillage of  
**trib.** my pleasure-house was noised abroad among the folk, and they came to me from all sides, some rejoicing in my misfortune and others excusing me and condoling with me, whilst I bewailed myself to them and ate not neither drank

for grief. As I sat, repenting me of what I had done, one of my servants came in to me and said, 'There is a man at the door, who asks for thee; and I know him not.' So I went out and found at the door a man whom I knew not. I saluted him, and he said to me, 'I have somewhat to say to thee privily.' So I brought him in and said to him, 'What hast thou to say to me?' Quoth he, 'Come with me to thine other house.' 'Dost thou then know my other house?' asked I. 'I know all about thee,' replied he, 'and I know that also wherewith God will dispel thy concern.' So I said to myself, 'I will go with him whither he will;' and we went out and walked on till we came to my other house, which when he saw, he said to me, 'It is without door or doorkeeper, and we cannot sit in it; so come thou with me to another house.' Accordingly, he went on from place to place and I with him, till the night overtook us. Yet I put no question to him and we ceased not to walk on, till we reached the open country. He kept saying, 'Follow me,' and quickened his pace, whilst I hurried after him, heartening myself to go on. Presently, we came to the river-bank, where he took boat with me, and the boatman rowed us over to the other side. Here my guide landed and I after him and he took my hand and led me to a street I had never before entered, nor do I know in what quarter it is. Presently he stopped at the door of a house, and opening, entered and made me enter with him; after which he bolted the door with a bolt of iron and carried me along the vestibule, till he brought me in presence of ten men, brothers, as they were one and the same man. We saluted them and they returned our greeting and bade us be seated; so we sat down. Now I was like to die for very weariness; so they brought rose-water and sprinkled it on my face, after which they gave me to drink and set food before me, of which some of them ate with me. Quoth I to myself, 'Were

there aught of harm in the food, they would not eat with me.' So I ate, and when we had washed our hands, each of us returned to his place. Then said they to me, 'Dost thou know us?' 'I never in my life saw you nor this your abode,' answered I; 'nay, I know not even him who brought me hither.' Said they, 'Tell us thy case and lie not in aught.' 'Know then,' rejoined I, 'that my case is strange and my affair marvellous: but do you know aught of me?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'it was we took thy goods yesternight and carried off thy friend and her who was singing to him.' 'May God let down the veil of His protection over you!' said I. 'But where is my friend and she who was singing to him?' They pointed to two doors and replied, 'They are yonder, each in a room apart; but, by Allah, O our brother, the secret of their case is known to none but thee, for from the time we brought them hither, we have not seen them nor questioned them of their condition, seeing them to be persons of rank and dignity. This it was that hindered us from putting them to death: so tell us the truth of their case and be assured of their safety and thine own.' When I heard this, I was like to die of fright and said to them, 'O my brethren, if generosity were lost, it would not be found save with you and had I a secret, which I feared to divulge, your breasts alone should have the keeping of it.' And I went on to expatiate to them in this sense, till I saw that frankness would profit me more than concealment; so I told them the whole story. When they heard it, they said, 'And is this young man Ali ben Bekkar and this damsel Shemsennehar?' 'Yes,' answered I. This was grievous to them and they rose and made their excuses to the two lovers. Then they said to me, 'Part of what we took from thy house is spent, but here is what is left of it.' So saying, they gave me back the most part of my goods and engaged to return them to my house and restore me



the rest. So my heart was set at ease, and some of them abode with me, whilst the rest fetched Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, who were well-nigh dead for excess of fear. Then they all sallied forth with us and I went up to the two lovers and saluting them, said to them, 'What became of the damsel and the two maids?' 'We know nothing of them,' answered they. Then we walked on till we came to the river-bank, where we all embarked in the boat that had brought me over before, and the boatman rowed us to the other side; but hardly had we landed and sat down on the bank to rest, when a troop of horse swooped down on us like eagles and surrounded us on all sides, whereupon the robbers with us sprang up in haste and the boatman, putting back for them, took them in and pushed off into mid-stream, leaving us on the bank, unable to move or abide still. The horseman said to us, 'Whence come ye?' And we were perplexed for an answer; but I said, 'Those ye saw with us are rogues: we know them not. As for us, we are singers, whom they would have taken to sing to them, nor could we win free of them, save by subtlety and fair words, and they have but now left us.' They looked at Ali and Shemsennehar and said to me, 'Thou hast not spoken sooth; but if thy tale be true, tell us who you are and whence you come and in what quarter you dwell.' I knew not what to answer, but Shemsennehar sprang up and approaching the captain of the troop, spoke with him privily, whereupon he dismounted and setting her on his steed, began to lead it along by the bridle. Two of his men did the like with Ali ben Bekkar and myself, and they fared on with us, till they reached a certain part of the river-bank, when the captain sang out in jargon and there came to us a number of men with two boats. The captain embarked with Shemsennehar in one boat and went his way, whilst the rest of his men put off in the other, with Ali ben Bekkar and myself, and rowed on with us, we the while



enduring the agonies of death for excess of fear, till they came to a place whence there was a way to our quarter. Here we landed and walked on, escorted by some of the horsemen, till we came to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where they took leave of us and went their way. We entered the house and abode there, unable to stir and knowing not night from day, till nightfall of the next day, when I came to myself and saw Ali ben Bekkar stretched out without sense or motion, and the men and women of his household weeping over him. When they saw that I had recovered my senses, some of them came to me and helping me sit up, said to me, 'Tell us what hath befallen our son and how he came in this plight.' 'O folk,' answered I, 'hearken

**Night** to me and importune me not; but be patient and he will  
**clxb.** come to himself and tell you his story for himself.' And I was round with them and made them afraid of a scandal between us; but as we were thus, behold, Ali ben Bekkar moved in his bed, whereat his friends rejoiced and the [most part of the] folk withdrew from him; but his people forbade me to go away. Then they sprinkled rose-water on his face, and he presently revived and breathed the air, whereupon they questioned him of his case. He essayed to answer them, but could not speak forthright and signed to them to let me go home. So they let me go, and I returned to my own house, supported by two men and hardly crediting my escape. When my people saw me thus, they fell a-shrieking and buffeting their faces; but I signed to them to hold their peace, and they were silent. Then the two men went their way and I threw myself down on my bed, where I lay the rest of the night and awoke not till the forenoon, when I found my people collected round me and they said, 'What hath befallen thee and what (evil) hath smitten thee with its mischief?' Quoth I, 'Bring me to drink.' So they brought me wine, and I drank what I would and said to them, 'Wine got the better of me and

it was this caused the state in which ye saw me.' Then they went away, and I made my excuses to my friends and asked if any of the goods that had been stolen from my other house had been returned.' 'Yes,' answered they. 'Some of them have come back: and the manner of their coming was that a man came and threw them down in the doorway and we saw him not.' So I comforted myself and abode two days, unable to rise, at the end of which time I began to regain strength and went to the bath, for I was worn out with fatigue and troubled at heart for Ali ben Bekkar and Shemsennehar, because I had no news of them all this time and could neither get to Ali's house nor rest in my own, out of fear for myself. And I repented to God the Most High of what I had done and praised Him for my safety. Then I bethought me to go to such and such a place and see the folk and divert myself; so I went to the stuff-market and sat awhile with a friend of mine there. When I rose to go, I saw a woman standing in my road; so I looked at her, and behold it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl. When I saw her, the world grew dark in my eyes and I hurried on. She followed me, but I was afraid and fled from her, trembling whenever I looked at her, whilst she pursued me, saying, 'Stop, that I may tell thee somewhat.' But I heeded her not and went on, till I reached a mosque in an unfrequented spot, and she said to me, 'Enter the mosque, that I may say a word to thee, and fear nothing.' And she conjured me: so I entered the mosque, and she after me. I prayed a two-bow prayer, after which I turned to her, sighing, and said, 'What dost thou want?' She asked me how I did, and I told her all that had befallen myself and Ali ben Bekkar and asked her for news of herself. 'Know,' answered she, 'that when I and the two maids saw the robbers break open thy door, we doubted not but they were the Khalif's officers and would seize us and our mistress and we perish forth-

right: so we fled over the roofs and casting ourselves down from a high place, took refuge with some people, who harboured us and brought us to the palace, where we arrived in the sorriest of plights. We concealed our case and abode on coals of fire till nightfall, when I opened the river-gate and calling the boatman who had carried us the night before, said to him, "I know not what is come of my mistress; so take me in thy boat, that we may seek her on the river: it may be I shall chance on some news of her." So he took me into the boat and rowed about with me till midnight, when I spied a boat making towards the water-gate, with one man rowing and another standing up and a woman lying prostrate between them. When they reached the shore and the woman landed, I looked at her, and behold, it was Shemsennehar. So I landed and

**N**ight joined her, dazed for joy, after having lost hope of her.

**clxi.** When I came up to her, she bade me give the man who had brought her thither a thousand dinars, and I and the two maids carried her in and laid her on her bed, and she at death's door. She abode thus all that day and the next day and I forbade the eunuchs and women to go in to her; but on the third day, she revived and I found her as she had come out of the grave. So I sprinkled rose-water upon her face and changed her clothes and washed her hands and feet, nor did I cease to persuade her, till I brought her to eat a little and drink some wine, though she had no mind to it. As soon as she had breathed the air and strength began to return to her, I fell to upbraiding her, saying, "Consider, O my lady, and have pity on thyself; thou seest what has betided us. Surely, enough of evil hath befallen thee and thou hast been nigh upon death." "By Allah, O good damsel," replied she, "death were easier to me than what hath befallen me; for I had renounced all hope of deliverance and gave myself up for lost. When the robbers took us from the jeweller's house,



they asked me who I was ; I replied, ' I am a singing-girl,' and they believed me. Then they said to Ali ben Bekkar, ' And who art thou and what is thy condition ? ' And he answered, ' I am of the common people.' So they carried us to their abode, and we hurried on with them for fear ; but when they had us with them in the house, they looked at me and seeing the clothes I wore and my necklaces and jewellery, believed me not and said to me, ' No singing-girl ever had such jewels as these ; tell us the truth of thy case.' I returned them no answer, saying in myself, ' Now will they kill me for my clothes and ornaments ; ' and I spoke not a word. Then they turned to Ali ben Bekkar and said to him, ' And thou, who and whence art thou ? For thy favour is not as that of the common folk.' But he was silent and we ceased not to keep our counsel and weep, till God inclined the rogues' hearts towards us and they said to us, ' Who is the owner of the house in which you were ? ' ' Such an one, the jeweller,' answered we ; whereupon quoth one of them, ' I know him well and where he lives, and I will engage to bring him to you forthright.' Then they agreed to set me in a place by myself and Ali ben Bekkar in a place by himself, and said to us, ' Be at rest and fear not lest your secret be divulged ; ye are safe from us.' Meanwhile their comrade went away and returned with the jeweller, who made known to them our case, and we joined company with him ; after which one of the band fetched a boat, in which they embarked us all three and rowing us over the river, landed us on the opposite bank and went away ; whereupon up came a horse-patrol and asked us who we were. So I spoke with the captain and said to him, ' I am Shemsennehar, the Khalif's favourite ; I had drunken wine and went out to visit certain of my acquaintance of the wives of the Viziers, when yonder rogues laid hold of me and brought me hither ; but when they saw you, they fled. I met these



men with them ; so do thou escort me and them to a place of safety and I will requite thee.' When the captain heard my speech, he knew me and alighting, mounted me on his horse ; and in like manner did two of his men with Ali and the jeweller. And now my heart is on fire on their account, especially for Ali's friend the jeweller : so do thou go to him and salute him and ask him for news of Ali ben Bekkar." I spoke to her and blamed her and bade her beware, saying, "O my lady, have a care for thyself and give up this intrigue." But she was angered at my words and cried out at me. So I came forth in quest of thee, but found thee not and dared not go to Ali's house ; so stood watching for thee, that I might ask thee of him and know how it is with him. And I beg thee, of thy favour, to take some money of me, for belike thou borrowedst of thy friends some of the goods, and as they are lost, it behoves thee to make them compensation.' 'I hear and obey,' answered I. 'Go on.' And I walked

Night  
clxxvii. with her till we drew near my house, when she said to me, 'Wait till I return to thee.' So she went away and presently returned with a bag of money, which she handed to me, saying, 'O my lord, where shall we meet?' Quoth I, 'I will go to my house at once and suffer hardship for thy sake and contrive how thou mayst win to him, for access to him is difficult at this present.' 'Let me know where I shall come to thee,' said she, and I answered, 'In my other house ; I will go thither forthright and have the doors repaired and the place made secure again, and henceforth we will meet there.' Then she took leave of me and went her way, whilst I carried the money home, and counting it, found it five thousand dinars. I gave my people some of it and made good their loss to all who had lent me aught, after which I took my servants and repaired to my other house, with builders and carpenters, who restored it to its former state. Moreover, I placed

my negress-slave there and forgot what had befallen me. Then I repaired to Ali ben Bekkar's house, where his servants accosted me, saying, 'Our lord calls for thee day and night and hath promised his freedom to whichever of us brings thee to him; so we have been in quest of thee everywhere, but knew not where to find thee. Our master is by way of recovery, but he has frequent relapses, and when he revives, he names thee and says, "Needs must ye bring him to me, though but for an instant," and sinks back into his torpor.' So I went in to Ali ben Bekkar and finding him unable to speak, sat down at his head, whereupon he opened his eyes and seeing me, wept and said, 'Welcome and fair welcome!' I raised him and making him sit up, strained him to my bosom, and he said, 'Know, O my brother, that, since I took to my bed, I have not sat up till now: praised be God that I see thee again!' Presently, little by little, I made him stand up and walk a few steps, after which I changed his clothes and he drank some wine. All this he did to please me. Then, seeing him to be somewhat restored, I told him what had befallen me with the slave-girl, none else hearing me, and said to him, 'I know what thou sufferest; but take heart and be of good courage; for henceforth nought shall betide thee, but what shall rejoice thee and ease thine heart.' He smiled and called for food, which being brought, he signed to his servants, and they withdrew. Then said he to me, 'O my brother, thou seest what hath befallen me;' and he made his excuses to me and enquired how I had fared all that while. I told him all that had befallen me, from first to last, at which he wondered and calling his servants, said, 'Bring me such and such things.' Accordingly, they brought in rich carpets and hangings and utensils of gold and silver, more than I had lost, and he gave them all to me; so I sent them to my house and abode with him that night. When the day began to break, he said to me, 'To

everything there is an end, and the end of love is death or enjoyment. I am nearer unto death, would I had died ere this befell! For, had not God favoured us, we had been discovered and put to shame. And now I know not what shall deliver me from this my strait, and were it not that I fear God, I would hasten my own death; for know, O my brother, that I am like the bird in the cage and that my life is of a surety perished, by reason of the distresses that have befallen me; yet hath it a fixed period and an appointed term.' And he wept and groaned and repeated the following verses:

Indeed, it sufficeth the lover the time that his tears have run; As for affliction, of patience it hath him all fordone.

He who concealeth the secrets conjoined us heretofore And now His hand hath severed that which Himself made one.

When he had finished, I said to him, 'O my lord, I would fain return to my house; it may be the damsel will come back to me with news.' 'It is well,' answered he; 'go and return to me speedily with news, for thou seest my condition.' So I took leave of him and went home. Hardly had I sat down, when up came the damsel, choked with her tears. 'What is the matter?' asked I, and she said, 'O my lord, what we feared has fallen on us; for, when I returned yesterday to my lady, I found her enraged with one of the two maids who were with us the other night, and she ordered her to be beaten. The girl took fright and ran away; but one of the gate-keepers stopped her and would have sent her back to her mistress. However, she let fall some hints, which excited his curiosity; so he coaxed her and led her on to talk, and she acquainted him with our case. This came to the ears of the Khalif, who bade remove my mistress and all her gear to his own palace and set over her a guard of twenty eunuchs. Since then he has not visited her nor given her to know the cause of his action, but I suspect this to be



the cause ; wherefore I am in fear for myself and am perplexed, O my lord, knowing not what I shall do nor how I shall order my affair and hers, for she had none more trusted nor trustier than myself. So do thou go quickly **Night** to Ali ben Bekkar and acquaint him with this, that he may **clxviii.** be on his guard ; and if the affair be discovered, we will cast about for a means of saving ourselves.' At this, I was sore troubled and the world grew dark in my sight for the girl's words. Then she turned to go, and I said to her, 'What is to be done?' Quoth she, 'My counsel is that thou hasten to Ali ben Bekkar, if thou be indeed his friend and desire his escape ; thine be it to carry him the news forthright, and be it mine to watch for further news.' Then she took her leave of me and went away. I followed her out and betaking myself to Ali ben Bekkar, found him flattering himself with hopes of speedy enjoyment and staying himself with vain expectations. When he saw me, he said, 'I see thou hast come back to me forthwith.' 'Summon up all thy patience,' answered I, 'and put away thy vain doting and shake off thy preoccupation, for there hath befallen that which may bring about the loss of thy life and goods.' When he heard this, he was troubled and his colour changed and he said to me, 'O my brother, tell me what hath happened.' 'O my lord,' replied I, 'such and such things have happened and thou art lost without recourse, if thou abide in this thy house till the end of the day.' At this he was confounded and his soul well-nigh departed his body, but he recovered himself and said to me, 'What shall I do, O my brother, and what is thine advice?' 'My advice,' answered I, 'is that thou take what thou canst of thy property and whom of thy servants thou trustest and flee with me to a land other than this, ere the day come to an end.' And he said, 'I hear and obey.' So he rose, giddy and dazed, now walking and now falling down and took what came under his hand. Then he made



an excuse to his household and gave them his last injunctions, after which he loaded three camels and mounted his hackney. I did the like and we went forth privily in disguise and fared on all day and night, till nigh upon morning, when we unloaded and hobbling our camels, lay down to sleep; but, being worn with fatigue, we neglected to keep watch, so that there fell on us robbers, who stripped us of all we had and slew our servants, when they would have defended us, after which they made off with their booty, leaving us naked and in the sorriest of plights. As soon as they were gone, we arose and walked on till morning, when we came to a village and took refuge in its mosque. We sat in a corner of the mosque all that day and the next night, without meat or drink; and at day-break, we prayed the morning prayer and sat down again. Presently, a man entered and saluting us, prayed a two-bow prayer, after which he turned to us and said, 'O folk, are ye strangers?' 'Yes,' answered we, 'robbers waylaid us and stripped us, and we came to this town, but know none here with whom we may shelter.' Quoth he, 'What say you? Will you come home with me?' And I said to Ali ben Bekkar, 'Let us go with him, and we shall escape two evils; first, our fear lest some one who knows us enter the mosque and so we be discovered; and secondly, that we are strangers and have no place to lodge in.' 'As thou wilt,' answered he. Then the man said to us again, 'O poor folk, give ear unto me and come with me to my house.' 'We hear and obey,' answered I; whereupon he pulled off a part of his own clothes and covered us therewith and made his excuses to us and spoke kindly to us. Then we accompanied him to his house and he knocked at the door, whereupon a little servant came out and opened to us. We entered after our host, who called for a parcel of clothes and muslin for turbans, and gave us each a suit of clothes and a piece of muslin; so we made us

turbans and sat down. Presently, in came a damsel with a tray of food and set it before us, saying, 'Eat.' We ate a little and she took away the tray; after which we abode with our host till nightfall, when Ali ben Bekkar sighed and said to me, 'Know, O my brother, that I am a dead man and I have a charge to give thee: it is that, when thou seest me dead, thou go to my mother and tell her and bid her come hither, that she may be present at the washing of my body and take order for my funeral; and do thou exhort her to bear my loss with patience.' Then he fell down in a swoon and when he revived, he heard a damsel singing afar off and addressed himself to give ear to her and hearken to her voice; and now he was absent from the world and now came to himself, and anon he wept for grief and mourning at what had befallen him. Presently, he heard the damsel sing the following verses:

Parting hath wrought in haste our union to undo  
After the straitest loves and concord 'twixt us two.

The shifts of night and day have torn our lives apart. When shall we meet again? Ah, would to God I knew!

After conjoined delight, how bitter sev'rance is! Would God it had no power to baffle lovers true!

Death's anguish hath its hour, then endeth; but the pain Of sev'rance from the loved at heart is ever new.

Could we but find a way to come at parting's self, We'd surely make it taste of parting's cup of rue.

When he heard this, he gave one sob and his soul quitted his body. As soon as I saw that he was dead, I committed his body to the care of the master of the house and said to him, 'I go to Baghdad, to tell his mother and kinsfolk, that they may come hither and take order for his burial.' So I betook myself to Baghdad and going to my house, changed my clothes, after which I repaired to Ali ben Bekkar's lodging. When his servants saw me, they came to me and questioned me of him, and I bade them ask leave for me to go in to his mother. She bade admit me;

so I entered and saluting her, said, 'Verily God orders the lives of all creatures by His commandment and when He decreeth aught, there is no escaping its fulfilment, nor can any soul depart but by His leave, according to the Writ which prescribeth the appointed terms.' She guessed by these words that her son was dead and wept sore, then she said to me, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me, is my son dead?' I could not answer her for tears and much grief, and when she saw me thus, she was choked with weeping and fell down in a swoon. As soon as she came to herself, she said to me, 'Tell me how my son died.' 'May God abundantly requite thee for him!' answered I and told her all that had befallen him, from first to last. 'Did he give thee any charge?' asked she. 'Yes,' answered I and told her what he had said, adding, 'Hasten to take order for his funeral.' When she heard this, she swooned away again; and when she recovered, she addressed herself to do as I bade her. Then I returned to my house; and as I went along, musing sadly upon his fair youth, a woman caught hold of my hand. I looked at her and behold, it was Shemsennehar's slave-girl, broken for grief. When we knew each other, we both wept and gave not over weeping till we reached my house, and I said to her, 'Knowest thou the news of Ali ben Bekkar?' 'No, by Allah,' replied she; so I told her the manner of his death and all that had passed, whilst we both wept; after which I said to her, 'And how is it with thy mistress?' Quoth she, 'The Khalif would not hear a word against her, but saw all her actions in a favourable light, of the great love he bore her, and said to her, "O Shemsennehar, thou art dear to me and I will bear with thee and cherish thee, despite thine enemies." Then he bade furnish her a saloon decorated with gold and a handsome sleeping-chamber, and she abode with him in all ease of life and high favour. One day, as he sat at wine, according to his wont, with

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his favourites before him, he bade them be seated in their places and made Shemsennehar sit by his side. (Now her patience was exhausted and her disorder redoubled upon her.) Then he bade one of the damsels sing: so she took a lute and tuning it, preluded and sang the following verses :

One sought me of love and I yielded and gave him that which he sought,  
And my tears write the tale of my transport in furrows upon my  
cheek.

Meseemeth as if the teardrops were ware, indeed, of our case And hide  
what I'd fain discover and tell what to hide I seek.

How can I hope to be secret and hide the love that I feel, Whenas the  
stress of my longing my passion for thee doth speak?

Death, since the loss of my loved ones, is sweet to me : would I knew  
What unto them is pleasant, now that they've lost me eke !

When Shemsennehar heard these verses, she could not keep her seat, but fell down in a swoon, whereupon the Khalif threw the cup from his hand and drew her to him, crying out. The damsels clamoured and he turned her over and shook her, and behold, she was dead. The Khalif grieved sore for her death and bade break all the vessels and lutes and other instruments of mirth and music in the place; then carrying her body to his closet, he abode with her the rest of the night. When the day broke, he laid her out and commanded to wash her and shroud her and bury her. And he mourned very sore for her and questioned not of her case nor what ailed her. And I beg thee in God's name,' continued the damsel, 'to let me know the day of the coming of Ali ben Bekkar's funeral train, that I may be present at his burial.' Quoth I, 'For myself, thou canst find me where thou wilt; but thou, who can come at thee where thou art?' 'On the day of Shemsennehar's death,' answered she, 'the Commander of the Faithful freed all her women, myself among the rest; and we are now abiding at the tomb in such a place.' So I accompanied her to the burial-ground and visited Shems-



ennehar's tomb;<sup>1</sup> after which I went my way and awaited the coming of Ali ben Bekkar's funeral. When it arrived, the people of Baghdad went forth to meet it and I with them; and I saw the damsel among the women and she the loudest of them in lamentation, crying out and wailing with a voice that rent the vitals and made the heart ache. Never was seen in Baghdad a greater funeral than his and we ceased not to follow in crowds, till we reached the cemetery and buried him to the mercy of God the Most High; nor from that time to this have I ceased to visit his tomb and that of Shemsennehar." This, then, is their story, and may God the Most High have mercy upon them!

#### KEMEREZZEMAN AND BUDOUR.

**Night** There was once, of old time, a king called Shehriman, who was lord of many troops and guards and officers and **clxx.** reigned over certain islands, known as the Khalidan Islands, on the borders of the land of the Persians; but he was grown old and decrepit, without having been blessed with a son, albeit he had four wives, daughters of kings, and threescore concubines, with each of whom he was wont to lie one night in turn. This preyed upon his mind and disquieted him, so that he complained thereof to one of his Viziers, saying, 'I fear lest my kingdom be lost, when I die, for that I have no son to take it after me.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'peradventure God shall yet provide for this; do thou put thy trust in Him and be constant in supplication to Him.' So the King rose and making his ablutions, prayed a two-bow prayer with a believing heart; after which he called one of his wives to bed and lay with her forthright. By God's grace, she conceived by him and when her months were accomplished, she bore a male child, like the moon on the night of its full. The King

<sup>1</sup> As that of a martyr. See Vol. II. p. 25, note 2.

named him Kemerezzeman and rejoiced in him with exceeding joy and bade decorate the city in his honour. So they decorated the city seven days, whilst the drums beat and the messengers bore the glad tidings abroad. Meanwhile nurses and attendants were provided for the boy and he was reared in splendour and delight, until he reached the age of fifteen. He grew up of surpassing beauty and symmetry, and his father loved him very dear, so that he could not brook to be parted from him day or night. One day, he complained to one of his Viziers of the excess of his love for his son, saying, 'O Vizier, of a truth I fear the shifts and accidents of fortune for my son Kemerezzeman and fain would I marry him in my lifetime.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'marriage is one of the most honourable of actions, and thou wouldst indeed do well to marry thy son in thy lifetime, ere thou make him king.' Quoth the King, 'Fetch me my son;' so Kemerezzeman came and bowed his head before his father, out of modesty. 'O Kemerezzeman,' said the King, 'I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee in my lifetime.' 'O my father,' answered the prince, 'know that I have no wish to marry, nor doth my soul incline to women; for that I have read many books and heard much talk concerning their craft and perfidy, even as saith the poet:

If ye would know of women and question of their case, Lo, I am versed  
in their fashions and skilled all else above.

When a man's head grows grizzled or for the nonce his wealth Fails  
from his hand, then, trust me, he hath no part in their love.

And again:

Gainsay women; he obeyeth Allah best who saith them nay, And he  
prospereth not who giveth them his bridle-rein to sway;

For they'll hinder him from winning to perfection in his gifts, Though  
a thousand years he study, seeking after wisdom's way.

Wherefore (continued Kemerezzeman) marriage is a thing to which I will never consent; no, not though I

**Night** drink the cup of death.' When the King heard this, the  
**clxi.** light in his sight became darkness and he was excessively  
 chagrined at his son's lack of obedience to his wishes;  
 yet, for the great love he bore him, he forbore to press  
 him and was not wroth with him, but caressed him and  
 spoke him fair and showed him all manner of kindness  
 such as tends to cultivate affection. He took patience  
 with him a whole year, during which time Kemerezzeman  
 increased daily in beauty and elegance and amorous grace,  
 till he became perfect in eloquence and loveliness. All  
 men were ravished with his beauty and every breeze that  
 blew carried the tidings of his charms; he was a seduction  
 to lovers and a garden of delight to longing hearts, for he  
 was sweet of speech and his face put the full moon to  
 shame. Accomplished in symmetry as in elegance and  
 engaging manners, his shape was slender and graceful as  
 the willow-wand or the flowering cane and his cheeks  
 might pass for roses or blood-red anemones. He was,  
 in fine, charming in all respects, even as the poet hath  
 said of him :

He comes and "Blest be God!" say all men, high and base. "Glory  
 to Him who shaped and fashioned forth his face!"

He's monarch of the fair, wherever they may be; For, lo, they're all  
 become the liegemen of his grace.

The water of his mouth is liquid honey-dew And 'twixt his lips for teeth  
 fine pearls do interlace.

Perfect in every trait of beauty and unique, His witching loveliness  
 distracts the human race.

Beauty itself hath writ these words upon his cheek, "Except this youth  
 there's none that's fair in any place."

When the year came to an end, the King called his son  
 to him and said, 'O my son, wilt thou not hearken to  
 me?' Whereupon Kemerezzeman fell down for respect  
 and shame before his father and replied, 'O my father,  
 how should I not hearken to thee, seeing that God com-  
 mandeth me to obey thee and not gainsay thee?' 'O my

son,' said King Shehriman, 'know that I desire to marry thee and rejoice in thee, whilst yet I live, and make thee king over my realm, before my death.' When the prince heard this, he bowed his head awhile, then raised it and said, 'O my father, this is a thing that I will never do, though I drink the cup of death. I know of a surety that God the Most High enjoins on me obedience to thee; but in His name I conjure thee, press me not in this matter of marriage, neither think that I will ever marry my life long; for that I have read the books both of the ancients and the moderns and have come to know all the troubles and calamities that have befallen them through women and the disasters that have sprung from their craft without end. How well says the poet:

He, whom the baggages entrap, Deliverance shall never know,  
 Although a thousand forts he build, Plated with lead ;—'gainst such a foe  
 It shall not profit him to build Nor citadels avail, I trow.  
 Women are traitresses to all, Both near and far and high and low.  
 With fingers dyed and flowing hair Plaited with tresses, sweet of show,  
 And eyelids beautified with kohl, They make one drink of bale and woe.

And no less excellently saith another :

Women, for all to chastity they're bidden, everywhere Are carrion tossed  
 about of all the vultures of the air.  
 To-night their converse, ay, and all their secret charms are thine, But  
 on the morn their leg and wrist fall to another's share;  
 Like to an inn in which thou lodg'st, departing with the dawn, And one  
 thou know'st not, after thee, lights down and lodges there.

When King Shehriman heard these his son's words, he made him no answer, of his great love for him, but redoubled in favour and kindness to him. As soon as the audience was over, he called his Vizier and taking him apart, said to him, 'O Vizier, tell me how I shall do with my son in this matter of his marriage. I took counsel **Night** with thee thereon and thou didst counsel me to marry **clixix** him, before making him king. I have spoken with him



once and again of marriage, and he still gainsaid me; so do thou now counsel me what to do.' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'wait another year, and if after that thou be minded to speak to him on the matter of marriage, do it not privily, but on a day of state, when all the Viziers and Amirs are present and all the troops standing before thee. Then send for thy son and broach to him the matter of marriage before the Viziers and grandees and officers of state and captains; for he will surely be daunted by their presence and will not dare to oppose thy will.' The King rejoiced exceedingly in his Vizier's advice, deeming it excellent, and bestowed on him a splendid robe of honour. Then he took patience with his son another year, whilst, with every day that passed over him, Kemerezzeman increased in grace and beauty and elegance and perfection, till he was nigh twenty years old. Indeed, God had clad him in the habit of beauty and crowned him with the crown of perfection: his eyes were more ensorcelling than Harout and Marout<sup>1</sup> and the play of his glances more misleading than Taghout.<sup>2</sup> His cheeks shone with redness and his eyelashes outvied the keen-edged sword: the whiteness of his forehead resembled the shining moon and the blackness of his hair was as the murky night. His waist was more slender than the gossamer and his buttocks heavier than two hills of sand, troubling the heart with their softness; but his waist complained of their weight. In fine, his charms ravished all mankind, even as saith the poet:

By his cheeks' unfading damask and his smiling teeth I swear, By the  
arrows that he feathers with the witchery of his air,  
By his sides so soft and tender and his glances bright and keen, By the  
whiteness of his forehead and the blackness of his hair,  
By his arched imperious eyebrows, chasing slumber from mine eyes, With  
their yeas and noes that hold me 'twixt rejoicing and despair,

<sup>1</sup> Two fallen angels appointed to tempt men by teaching them the art of magic.

<sup>2</sup> An idol or idols of the Arabs before Mohammed.

By the scorpious<sup>1</sup> that he launches from his ringlet-clustered brows,  
 Seeking ever in their meshes hapless lovers to ensnare,  
 By the myrtle of his whiskers and the roses of his cheeks, By his lips'  
 incarnate rubies and his teeth's fine pearls and rare,  
 By his breath's delicious fragrance and the waters of his mouth, That  
 defy old wine and choicest with their sweetness to compare,  
 By his heavy hips that tremble, both in motion and repose, And the  
 slender waist above them, all too slight their weight to bear,  
 By his hand's perennial bounty and his true and trusty speech, By the  
 stars that smile upon him, favouring and debonair,  
 Lo, the scent of musk none other than his very perfume is, And the  
 ambergris's fragrance breathes about him everywhere.  
 Yea, the sun in all his splendour cannot with his brightness vie, And the  
 crescent moon's a fragment that he from his nail doth pare.

The King, accordingly, waited till a day of state, when **Nigh**  
 the audience hall was filled with his Amirs and Viziers and **clxxiii.**  
 grandees and officers of state and captains. As soon as  
 they were all assembled, he sent for his son Kemerezzem-  
 man, who came and kissing the earth three times, stood  
 before him, with his hands clasped behind his back. Then  
 said the King to him, 'Know, O my son, that I have sent  
 for thee and summoned thee to appear before this assembly  
 and all these officers of state that I may lay a command-  
 ment on thee, wherein do thou not gainsay me. It is  
 that thou marry, for I am minded to wed thee to a king's  
 daughter and rejoice in thee ere I die.' When the prince  
 heard these his father's words, he bowed his head awhile,  
 then raising it, replied, being moved thereto by youthful  
 folly and boyish ignorance, 'Never will I marry, no, not  
 though I drink the cup of death! As for thee, thou art  
 great in years and little of wit: hast thou not, twice before  
 this, questioned me of the matter of marriage, and I re-  
 fused thee? Indeed, thou dotest and art not fit to govern  
 a flock of sheep!' So saying, he unclasped his hands from

<sup>1</sup> The browlocks, from their shape, are commonly likened by Eastern poets to scorpions.

behind his back and rolled up his sleeves, in his rage; moreover, he added many words to his father, knowing not what he said, in the trouble of his spirit. The King was confounded and ashamed, for that this befell in the presence of his grantees and officers assembled on an occasion of state; but presently the energy of kingship took him and he cried out upon his son and made him tremble. Then he called to his guards and bade them seize him and bind his hands behind his back. So they laid hands on Kemerezzeman and binding him, brought him before his father, full of shame and confusion, with his head bowed down for fear and inquietude and his brow and face beaded with sweat. The King loaded him with reproaches, saying, 'Out on thee, thou whoreson and nursing of abomination! Dost thou dare to answer me thus before my captains and officers? But hitherto none hath corrected thee. Knowest thou not that this thou hast done were disgraceful in the meanest of my subjects?' And he commanded his guards to loose his bonds and imprison him in one of the turrets of the citadel. So they carried the prince into an old tower, wherein there was a dilapidated saloon, after having first swept it and cleansed its floor and set him a couch in its midst, on which they laid a mattress, a leathern rug and a cushion. Then they brought him a great lantern and a candle, for the place was dark, even by day, and posting an eunuch at the door, left him to himself. Kemerezzeman threw himself on the couch, broken-spirited and mournful-hearted, blaming himself and repenting of his unseemly behaviour to his father, when repentance availed him nothing, and saying, 'May God curse marriage and girls and women, the traitresses! Would I had hearkened to my father and married! It were better for me than this prison.'

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Meanwhile, King Shehriman abode on his throne till sundown, when he took the Vizier apart and said to him,



'O Vizier, thine advice is the cause of all this that hath befallen between me and my son. What doth thou counsel me to do now?' 'O King,' answered he, 'leave thy son in prison for the space of fifteen days; then send for him and command him to marry, and he will not again gainsay thee.' The King accepted the Vizier's counsel and lay down to sleep, troubled at heart concerning Kemerezzeman, for he loved him very dearly, having no other child, and it was his wont not to sleep, save with his arm about his son's neck. So he passed the night in trouble and unease, tossing from side to side, as he were laid on coals of tamarisk-wood; for he was overcome with inquietude and sleep visited him not all that night; but his eyes ran over with tears and he repeated the following verses:

The night, whilst the slanderers sleep, is tedious unto me; Suffice thee  
a heart that aches for parting's agony!  
I cry, whilst my night for care grows long and longer aye, "O light of  
the morning, say, is there no returning for thee?"

And these also:

When the Pleiads I saw leave to shine in their stead And over the pole-  
star a lethargy shed  
And the maids of the Bier<sup>1</sup> in black raiment unveiled, I knew that the  
lamp of the morning was dead.

To return to Kemerezzeman. When the night came on, the eunuch set the lantern before him and lighting a candle, placed it in the candlestick; then brought him food. The prince ate a little and reproached himself for his ill-behaviour to his father, saying to himself, 'O my soul, knowst thou not that a son of Adam is the hostage of his tongue and that a man's tongue is what casts him into perils?' Then his eyes ran over with tears and he bewailed that which he had done, from an anguished heart and an aching bosom, repenting him with an exceeding

<sup>1</sup> Three stars so called in the Great Bear.



repentance of the wrong he had done his father and repeating the following verses:

For the sheer stumble of his tongue the youth must death aby, Though  
for the stumble of his foot the grown man shall not die.

Thus doth the slipping of his mouth smite off his head, I ween, What  
while the slipping of his foot is healed, as time goes by.

When he had made an end of eating, he called the eunuch, who washed his hands. Then he made his ablutions and prayed the prayers of sundown and nightfall, **N**ight after which he sat down on the couch, to read<sup>1</sup> the Koran. **clxxvi.** He read the chapters called 'The Cow,' 'The family of Imran,' 'Ya-Sin,' 'The Compassionate,' 'Blessed be the King,' 'Unity' and 'The two Amulets,' and concluded with blessing and supplication, seeking refuge with God from Satan the accursed. Then he put off his trousers and the rest of his clothes and lay down, in a shirt of fine waxed cloth and a coif of blue stuff of Merv, upon a mattress of satin, embroidered on both sides with gold and quilted with Irak silk, having under his head a pillow stuffed with ostrich-down. In this guise, he was like the full moon, when it rises on its fourteenth night. Then, drawing over himself a coverlet of silk, he fell asleep with the lantern burning at his feet and the candle at his head, and woke not for a third part of the night, being ignorant of that which lurked for him in the secret purpose of God and what He who knoweth the hidden things had appointed unto him. Now, as chance and destiny would have it, the tower in question was old and had been many years deserted; and there was therein a Roman well, inhabited by an Afriteh of the lineage of Iblis the Accursed, **N**ight by name Maimouneh, daughter of Ed Dimiryat, a renowned **clxxvii.** King of the Jinn. In the middle of the night, Maimouneh came up out of the well and made for heaven, thinking to listen by stealth to the discourse of the angels; but, when

<sup>1</sup> or recite.





she reached the mouth of the well, she saw a light shining in the tower, contrary to wont; whereat she was mightily amazed, having dwelt there many years and never seen the like, and said to herself, 'Needs must there be some cause for this.' So she made for the light and found that it came from the saloon, at whose door she found the eunuch sleeping. She entered and saw a man lying asleep upon the couch, with the lantern burning at his feet and the candle at his head; at which she wondered and going softly up to him, folded her wings and drawing back the coverlid, discovered his face. The lustre of his visage outshone that of the candle, and the Afriteh abode awhile, astounded at his beauty and grace; for his face beamed with light, his cheeks were rose-red and his eyelids languorous; his brows were arched like bows and his whole person exhaled a scent of musk, even as saith of him the poet:

I kissed him and his cheeks forthwith grew red, and black and bright  
The pupils grew that are my soul's seduction and delight.

O heart, if slanderers avouch that there exists his like For goodness,  
say thou to them, "Produce him to my sight."

When Maimouneh saw him, she glorified God and said, 'Blessed be Allah, the best of Creators!' For she was of the true-believing Jinn. She stood awhile, gazing on his face, proclaiming the unity of God and envying the youth his beauty and grace. And she said in herself, 'By Allah, I will do him no hurt nor let any harm him, but will ransom him from all ill, for this fair face deserves not but that folk should look upon it and glorify God. But how could his family find it in their hearts to leave him in this desert place, where if one of our Marids came upon him at this hour, he would kill him?' Then she bent over him and kissing him between the eyes, folded back the coverlet over his face; after which she spread her wings and soaring into the air, flew upward till she drew near



the lowest heaven, when she heard the noise of wings beating the air and making for the sound, found that it came from an Afrit called Dehnesh. So she swooped down on him like a sparrow-hawk; and when he was ware of her and knew her to be Maimounch, daughter of the King of the Jinn, he feared her and his nerves trembled; and he implored her forbearance, saying, 'I conjure thee by the Most Great and August Name and by the most noble talisman graven upon the seal of Solomon, entreat me kindly and harm me not!' When she heard this, her heart inclined to him and she said, 'Verily, thou conjurest me with a mighty conjuration, O accursed one! Nevertheless, I will not let thee go, till thou tell me whence thou comest at this hour.' 'O princess,' answered he, 'know that I come from the uttermost end of the land of Cathay and from among the islands, and I will tell thee of a wonderful thing I have seen this night. If thou find my words true, let me go my way and write me a patent under thy hand that I am thy freedman, so none of the Jinn, whether of the air or the earth, divers or flyers,<sup>1</sup> may do me let or hindrance.' 'And what is it thou hast seen this night, O liar, O accursed one?' rejoined Maimounch. 'Tell me without leasing and think not to escape from my hand with lies, for I swear to thee by the inscription on the bezel of the ring of Solomon son of David (on whom be peace,) except thy speech be true, I will pluck out thy feathers with mine own hand and strip off thy skin and break thy bones!' 'I accept this condition, O my lady,' answered Dehnesh, son of Shemhourish the Flyer. 'Know that I come to-night from the Islands of the Inland Sea in the parts of Cathay, which are the dominions of King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and the Seven

<sup>1</sup> There are three orders of Jinn: the upper or inhabitants of the air, the lower or inhabitants of the earth and the divers or inhabitants of the waters.

**Palaces.** There I saw a daughter of his, than whom God hath made none fairer in her time,—I cannot picture her to thee, for my tongue would fail to describe her aright; but I will name to thee somewhat of her charms, by way of approximation. Her hair is like the nights of estrangement and separation and her face like the days of union; and the poet hath well described her when he says:

She took up three locks of her hair and spread them out one night And straight four nights discovered at once unto my sight.  
Then did she turn her visage up to the moon of the sky And showed me two moons at one season, both burning clear and bright.

She hath a nose like the point of the burnished sword and cheeks like purple wine or blood-red anemones: her lips are like coral and cornelian and the water of her mouth is sweeter than old wine, its taste would allay the torments of Hell. Her tongue is moved by abounding wit and ready repartee: her breast is a temptation to all that see it, glory be to Him who created it and finished it! and joined thereto are two smooth round arms. As says of her the poet El Welhan:

She hath two wrists, which, were they not by bracelets held, I trow,  
Would flow out of their sleeves as brooks of liquid silver flow.

She has breasts like two globes of ivory, the moons borrow from their brightness, and a belly dimpled as it were a brocaded cloth of the finest Egyptian linen, with creases like folded scrolls, leading to a waist slender past conception, over buttocks like a hill of sand, that force her to sit, when she would fain stand, and awaken her, when she would sleep, even as saith of her the poet:

Her slender waist a pair of buttocks overlies, The which both over her and me do tyrannize.

For they confound my wit, whenas I think on them, And eke enforce her sit, whenas she fain would rise.

They are upborne by smooth round thighs and legs like columns of pearl, and all this rests upon two slender feet, pointed like spear-blades, the handiwork of God, the Protector and Requiter, I wonder how, of their littleness, they can sustain what is above them. But I cut short my  
 Night description of her charms, lest I be tedious. The father  
 clxxix. of this young lady is a powerful king, a fierce cavalier, immersed night and day in wars and battles, fearless of death and dreading not ruin, for that he is a masterful tyrant and an irresistible conqueror, lord of troops and armies, continents and islands, cities and villages, and his name is King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and of the Seven Palaces. He loves his daughter, the young lady whom I have described to thee, very dearly, and for love of her, he gathered together the treasures of all the kings and built her therewith seven palaces, each of a different fashion; the first of crystal, the second of marble, the third of China steel, the fourth of precious stones, the fifth of porcelain and vari-coloured onyx, the sixth of silver and the seventh of gold. He filled the seven palaces with rich silken carpets and hangings and vessels of gold and silver and all manner of gear befitting kings and commanded his daughter, whose name is the Princess Budour, to abide in each by turns for a certain season of the year. When her beauty became known and her fame was noised abroad in the neighbouring countries, all the kings sent to her father, to demand her in marriage, and he consulted her on the matter, but she disliked it and said, "O my father, I have no mind to marry; for I am a sovereign lady and a princess ruling over men, and I have no desire for a man who shall rule over me." The more she refused, the more the eagerness of her suitors increased and all the kings of the Islands of the Inland Sea sent gifts and offerings to her father, with letters asking her in marriage. So he pressed her again and



again to make choice of a husband, despite her refusals, till at last she turned upon him angrily and said to him, "O my father, if thou name marriage to me again, I will go into my chamber and take a sword and fixing its hilt in the ground, set its point to my breast; then will I lean upon it, till it come forth from my back, and so kill myself." When the King heard this, the light became darkness in his sight and his heart was torn with anxiety and perplexity concerning her affair; for he feared lest she should kill herself and knew not how to deal with the kings who sought her hand. So he said to her, "If thou be irrevocably determined not to marry, abstain from going in and out." Then he shut her up in her chamber, appointing ten old body-women to guard her, and made as though he were wroth with her, forbidding her to go forth to the seven palaces; moreover, he sent letters to all the kings, giving them to know that she had been stricken with madness. It is now a year (continued Dehnesh) since she has been thus cloistered, and every night I go to her, whilst she is asleep, and take my fill of gazing on her face and kiss her between the eyes: yet, of my love to her, I do her no hurt neither swive her, for that her youth is fair and her loveliness surpassing; every one who sees is jealous for her of himself. I conjure thee, therefore, O my lady, to go back with me and look on her beauty and symmetry; and after, if thou wilt, chastise me or enslave me: for it is thine to command and to forbid.' So saying, he bowed his head towards the earth and drooped his wings; but Maimounch laughed at his words and spitting in his face, answered, 'What is this girl of whom thou pratest but a potsherd to cleanse the privities withal? Faugh! Faugh! By Allah, O accursed one, I thought thou hadst some rare story to tell me or some marvel to make known to me! How would it be if thou sawest my beloved? Verily, this night I have seen a young man,



whom if thou sawest though but in sleep, thou wouldst be palsied with admiration and thy mouth would water.' 'And who and what is this youth?' asked the Afrit. 'Know, O Dehnesh,' answered she, 'that there hath befallen him the like of what befell thy mistress; for his father pressed him again and again to marry, but he refused, till at length his father waxed wroth and imprisoned him in the tower where I dwell: and I came up to-night and saw him.' 'O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'show me the youth, that I may see if he be indeed handsomer than my mistress, the Princess Budour, or not; for I cannot believe that there lives her equal.' 'Thou liest, O accursed one!' rejoined Maimounch. 'O most ill-omened of Marids and vilest of Satans! Sure am I that there is not in this world the like of my beloved. Art thou mad to even thy beloved with mine?' 'I conjure thee by Allah, O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'to go back with me and see my mistress, and after I will return with thee and look upon thy beloved.' 'It must needs be so, O accursed one!' answered she. 'Yet, for that thou art a knavish devil, I will not go with thee nor shalt thou come with me, save upon surety and condition of pledge. If thy beloved prove handsomer than mine, the pledge shall be thine against me; but if my beloved prove the fairer, the pledge shall be mine against thee.' 'O my lady,' said Dehnesh, 'I accept this thy condition; so come with me to the Islands.' 'Not so,' replied Maimounch; 'for the abode of my beloved is nearer than that of thine: here it is under us; so come down with me and see my beloved, and after we will go look upon thy mistress.' 'I hear and obey,' said Dehnesh. So they descended and alighting on the tower, entered the saloon, where Maimounch stationed Dehnesh beside the bed and putting out her hand, drew back the silken coverlet, whereupon Kemerezzeman's face shone out like the sun. She looked at him a moment, then turning to Dehnesh, said,

Night  
clxxx.

'Look, O accursed one, and be not the vilest of madmen; I am a maiden and am ravished with him.' So Dehnesh looked at the prince and gazed steadfastly on him awhile, then, shaking his head, said to Maimouneh, 'By Allah, O my lady, thou art excusable; but there is another thing to be considered, and that is that the female estate differs from the male. By the virtue of God, this thy beloved is the likest of all created things to my mistress in beauty and loveliness and grace and it is as though they were both cast alike in the mould of perfection!' When Maimouneh heard these words, the light in her sight became darkness and she dealt him so fierce a buffet on the head with her wing as well-nigh made an end of him. Then, 'I conjure thee,' said she, 'by the light of his glorious countenance, go at once, O accursed one, and bring hither thy mistress in haste that we may lay them together and look on them both, as they lie asleep side by side; so will it appear to us whether is the goodlier and more beautiful of the two. Except thou obey me forthright, I will dart my sparks at thee and consume thee with my fire; yea, I will rend thee in pieces and cast thee into the deserts, as an example to stay-at-home and wayfarer.' 'O my lady,' answered the Afrit, 'I will do thy bidding, for I know that my mistress is the fairer and sweeter.' So saying, he flew away and Maimouneh flew with him, to guard him. They were absent awhile and presently returned, bearing the young lady, who was clad in a shift of fine Venetian silk, laced with gold and wrought with the most exquisite broidery and having the following verses worked upon the ends of the sleeves:

Three things for ever hinder her to visit us, for fear Of the intriguing  
 spy and eke the rancorous envier;  
 Her forehead's lustre and the sound of all her ornaments And the sweet  
 scent her creases hold of ambergris and myrrh.  
 Grant with the border of her sleeve she hide her brows and doff Her  
 ornaments, how shall she do her scent away from her?

**Night** They carried her into the saloon and laying her beside  
**clxxi.** Kemerezzeman, uncovered both their faces, and behold,  
 they were the likest of all folk, one to the other, as they  
 were twins or an only brother and sister; and indeed they  
 were a temptation to the pious, even as says of them the  
 poet El Mubin:

Be not thy love, O heart, to one alone confined, Lest, for that one,  
 amaze and doting thee enwind;  
 But love thou rather all the fair, and thou shalt find, If one contrarious  
 prove, another will be kind.

And quoth another:

Two fair ones lying on the earth I did of late espy; Two that I needs  
 must love, although they lay upon mine eye.

Dehnesh and Maimounesh gazed on them awhile, and  
 the former said, 'By Allah, O my lady, it is good! My  
 mistress is assuredly the fairer.' 'Not so,' answered she;  
 'my beloved is the fairer. Out on thee, O Dehnesh! Thou  
 art blind of eye and heart and distinguishest not between  
 good and bad.<sup>1</sup> Wilt thou hide the truth? Dost thou not  
 see his beauty and grace and symmetry? Out on thee,  
 hear what I purpose to say in praise of my beloved, and  
 do thou the like for her thou lovest, an thou be a true  
 lover.' Then she kissed Kemerezzeman again and again  
 between the eyes and repeated the following ode:

Ah me, what ails the censurer that he at thee should fite? How shall I  
 be consoled for thee, and thou a sapling slight?  
 Thou of the black and languorous eye, that casteth far and wide Charms,  
 whose sheer witchery compels to passion's utmost height,  
 Whose looks, with Turkish languor fraught, work havoc in the breast,  
 Leaving such wounds as ne'er were made of falchion in the fight,  
 Thou layst on me a heavy load of passion and desire, On me that am  
 too weak to bear a shift upon me dight.  
 My love for thee, as well thou know'st, my very nature is, And that for  
 others which I feign dissembling but and sleight.

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* lean and fat.

An if my heart were like to thine, I'd not refuse ; alack ! 'Tis but my  
 body's like thy waist, worn thin and wasted quite.  
 Out on him for a moon that's famed for beauty far and near, That for  
 th' exemplar of all grace men everywhere do cite !  
 The railers say, "Who's this for love of whom thou art distressed ?"  
 And I reply, "An if ye can, describe the lovely wight."  
 O learn to yield, hard heart of his, take pattern by his shape ! So haply  
 yet he may relent and put away despite.  
 Thou, that my prince in beauty art, a steward<sup>1</sup> hast, whose rule Aggrieves  
 me and a chamberlain<sup>2</sup> that doth me foul unright.  
 He lies who says, "All loveliness in Joseph was comprised." How  
 many a Joseph is there not within thy beauty bright !  
 The Jinn do fear me, whenas I confront them face to face ; But when I  
 meet with thee, my heart doth tremble for affright.  
 I feign aversion unto thee, for fear of slanderous tongues ; The more I  
 feign, the more my love to madness I excite.  
 Black hair and smooth and glistening brows, eyes languorous and soft,  
 As of the maids of Paradise, and slender shape and slight !

When Dehnesh heard this, he shook for delight and was  
 filled with admiration and said, 'Thou hast indeed done <sup>Night</sup> ~~clxxxix~~  
 well in praise of him whom thou lovest ! Needs must I ~~clxxxix~~  
 do my endeavour, in my turn, to celebrate my mistress, to  
 the best of my power, and recite somewhat in her honour.'  
 Then he went up to the lady Budour and kissing her  
 between the eyes, looked at her and at Maimounah and  
 recited the following verses, for all he had no skill in  
 poetry :

They chide my passion for my fair in harsh and cruel guise ; But, of  
 their ignorance, forsooth, they're neither just nor wise.  
 Vouchsafe thy favours to the slave of love, for, an he taste Of thine  
 estrangement and disdain, assuredly he dies.  
 Indeed, for very stress of love, I'm drenched with streaming tears, That,  
 like a rivulet of blood, run ever from mine eyes.  
 No wonder 'tis what I for love endure ; the wonder is That any, since  
 the loss of thee, my body recognize.  
 Forbidden be thy sight to me, if I've a thought of doubt Or if my heart  
 of passion tire or feign or use disguise !

<sup>1</sup> *Syn. eye (nasir).*

<sup>2</sup> *Syn. eyebrow (kajil).*



And also the following :

I feed mine eyes on the places where we met long ago ; Far distant now  
is the valley and I'm forslain for woe.  
I'm drunk with the wine of passion and the teardrops in mine eyes  
Dance to the song of the leader of the camels, as we go.  
I cease not from mine endeavour to win to fortune fair ; Yet in Budour,  
Suada,<sup>1</sup> all fortune is, I know.  
Three things I reckon, I know not of which to most complain ; Give  
ear whilst I recount them and be you judge, I trow.  
Firstly, her eyes, the sworders ; second, the spearman, her shape, And  
thirdly, her ringlets that clothe her in armour,<sup>2</sup> row upon row.  
Quoth she (and indeed I question, for tidings of her I love, All whom I  
meet, or townsman or Bedouin, high or low)  
Quoth she unto me, "My dwelling is in thy heart ; look there And  
thou shalt see me." I answer, "And where is my heart ? Heigho !"

When Maimounch heard this, she said, 'Thou hast done well, O Dehnesh ! But tell me, which of the two is the handsomer ?' And he answered, 'My mistress Budour is certainly handsomer than thy beloved.' 'Thou liest, O accursed one !' cried Maimounch. 'Nay, my beloved is more beautiful than thine !' And they ceased not to gainsay each other, till Maimounch cried out at Dehnesh and would have laid violent hands on him ; but he humbled himself to her and softening his speech, said to her, 'Let us leave talking, for we do but contradict each other, and rather seek one who shall judge fairly between us, whether of the two is fairer, and let us abide by his sentence.' 'I agree to this,' answered she and smote the earth with her foot, whereupon there came up a one-eyed Afrit, hump-backed and scurvy, with eyes slit endlong in his face. On his head were seven horns and four locks of hair falling to his heels ; his hands were like pitchforks, his legs like masts and he had claws like a lion and hoofs like those of

<sup>1</sup> A play upon words turning upon the literal meaning ("auspicious full moons") of the two names of women *Budour* and *Suad*.

<sup>2</sup> Ring-mail.

the wild ass. When he saw Maimounch, he kissed the earth before her and standing with his hands clasped behind him, said, 'What is thy will, O king's daughter?' 'O Keshkesh,' answered she, 'I would have thee judge between me and this accursed Dehnesh.' And she made known to him the whole matter, whereupon he looked at the prince and princess and saw them lying asleep, embraced, each with an arm about the other's neck, alike in beauty and grace and equal in goodliness. The Marid gazed long and fixedly upon them, marvelling at their beauty, and repeated the following verses :

Cleave fast to her thou lov'st and let the envious rail amain, For calumny  
and envy ne'er to favour love were fain.

Lo, the Compassionate hath made no fairer thing to see Than when one  
couch in its embrace enfoldeth lovers twain,

Each to the other's bosom clasped, clad in their own delight, Whilst  
hand with hand and arm with arm about their necks enchain.

If in thy time thou find but one to love thee and be true, I rede thee  
cast the world away and with that one remain.

Lo, when two hearts are straitly knit in passion and desire, But on cold  
iron smite the folk that chide at them in vain.

Thou that for loving censurest the votaries of love, Canst thou assain a  
heart diseased or heal a cankered brain?

O Lord, O Thou Compassionate, I prithee, ere we die, Though only for  
a single day, unite us two again !

Then he turned to Maimounch and Dehnesh and said to them, 'By Allah, if you will have the truth, they are equal in beauty and grace and perfection, nor is there any difference between them but that of sex. But I have another idea, and it is that we wake each of them in turn, without the other's knowledge, and whichever is more enamoured of the other shall be held the lesser in beauty and grace.' 'This is a good counsel,' answered Maimounch, and Dehnesh said, 'I consent to this.' Then Dehnesh changed himself to a flea and bit Kemerezzeman on the **Night** neck, whereupon the prince awoke with a start and rubbed **clxxxiii**.

the place of the bite, because of the smart. Then turning sideways, he found lying by him something, whose breath was more fragrant than musk, and whose body was softer than cream. At this he marvelled greatly and sitting up, looked at this that lay beside him and saw it to be a young lady like the moon, as she were a splendid pearl, or a shining sun, five feet high, with a shape like the letter I, high-bosomed and rosy-cheeked; even as saith of her the poet :

Four things there are, which ne'er unite, except it be To shed my heart's best blood and take my soul by storm.

And these are night-black locks and brow as bright as day, Cheeks ruddy as the rose and straight and slender form.

And also quoth another :

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand, And breathes, pure ambergris, and gazes, a gazelle.

It seems as if grief loved my heart and when from her Estrangement I endure, possession to it fell.

She was clad in a shift of Venetian silk, without drawers, and wore on her head a kerchief embroidered with gold and jewels; her ears were hung with earrings, that shone like stars, and round her neck was a collar of great pearls, past the competence of any king. When he saw this, his reason was confounded and natural heat began to stir in him; God awoke in him the desire of coition and he said, 'What God wills, shall be, and what He will not, shall not be!' So saying, he put out his hand and turning her over, loosed the collar of her shift, laying bare her bosom, with its breasts like globes of ivory; whereat his inclination for her redoubled and he desired her with an exceeding desire. Then he shook her and moved her, essaying to waken her and saying, 'O my beloved, awake and look on me; I am Kemerezzeman.' But she awoke not, neither moved her head, for Dehnesh made her sleep heavy. With this, he considered awhile and said to himself, "If I guess

aright, this is she to whom my father would have married me and I have refused these three years past; but, God willing, as soon as it is day, I will say to him, "Marry me to her that I may enjoy her," nor will I let half the day pass ere I possess her and take my fill of her beauty and grace.' Then he bent over Budour, to kiss her, whereat Maimounch trembled and was confounded and Dehnesh was like to fly for joy. But, as Kemerezzeman was about to kiss her, he was ashamed before God and turned away his head, saying to his heart, 'Have patience.' Then he considered awhile and said, 'I will be patient, lest my father have brought this young lady and made her lie by my side, to try me with her, charging her not to be lightly awakened, whenas I would fain arouse her, and bidding her tell him all that I do to her. Belike, he is hidden somewhere whence he can see all I do with this young lady, himself unseen; and to-morrow he will flout me and say, "How comes it that thou feignest to have no mind to marry and yet didst kiss and clip yonder damsel?" So I will forbear her, lest I be shamed before my father; and it were well that I look not on her nor touch her at this present, except to take from her somewhat to serve as a sign of remembrance and a token between us.' Then he lifted her hand and took from her little finger a ring worth much money, for that its bezel was of precious jewels and around it were graven the following verses:

Think not that I have forgotten thy sometime promises, Though long  
thou hast protracted thy cruelty, ywis.

Be generous, O my master, vouchsafe me of thy grace, So it to me be  
given thy lips and cheeks to kiss.

Never, by Allah, never will I abandon thee, Though thou transgress thy  
limits in love and go amiss!

Then he put the ring on his own little finger, and turning his back to her, went to sleep. When Maimounch saw this, she was glad and said, 'Saw ye how my beloved

Night  
clxxxv.



Kemerezzeman forbore this young lady? Verily, this was of the perfection of his excellences; for see how he looked on her and noted her beauty and grace, yet clipped her not neither kissed her nor put his hand to her, but turned his back to her and slept.' 'It is well,' answered they; 'we saw how perfectly he bore himself.' Then Maimounch changed herself into a flea and entering Budour's clothes, crept up her leg and bit her four finger-breadths below the navel; whereupon she opened her eyes and sitting up in bed, saw a youth lying beside her and breathing heavily in his sleep, the loveliest of God's creatures, with eyes that put to shame the fair maids of Paradise, mouth like Solomon's seal, whose water was sweeter to the taste and more efficacious than triacle,<sup>1</sup> lips the colour of coral and cheeks like blood-red anemones, even as saith one, describing him:

From Zeyneb<sup>2</sup> and Newâr<sup>2</sup> my mind is drawn away By the rose of a cheek, where'er a whisker's myrtles stray.

I'm fallen in love with a fawn, a youngling tunic-clad, And joy no more in love of bracelet-wearing may.

My mate in banquet-hall and closet's all unlike To her with whom within my harem's close I play:

O thou that blamest me, because I flee from Hind<sup>2</sup> And Zeyneb, my excuse is clear as break of day.

Would'st have me be a slave, the bondsman of a slave, One cloistered and confined behind a wall alway?<sup>2</sup>

**Night** When the princess saw him, a transport of passion and  
clxxx. longing seized her and she said to herself, 'Alas my shame! This is a strange youth and I know him not. How comes he lying in one bed with me?' Then she looked at him again and noting his beauty and grace, said, 'By Allah, he is a comely youth and my heart is well-nigh torn in sunder

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* Orvietan or Venice treacle, the well-known universal remedy of the middle ages, alluded to by Chaucer in the words, "And Christ that is unto all ills triacle."

<sup>2</sup> Names of women.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* a woman.

with longing for him. But alas, how am I shamed by him! By Allah, had I known it was he who sought my hand of my father, I had not rejected him, but had married him and enjoyed his loveliness! Then she gazed in his face and said, 'O my lord and light of mine eyes, awake from sleep and enjoy my beauty and grace.' And she moved him with her hand; but Maimounéh let down sleep upon him (as it were a curtain) and pressed on his head with her wings, so that he awoke not. The princess went on to shake him and say, 'My life on thee, give ear unto me! Awake and look on the narcissus and the tender green and enjoy my body and my secret charms and dally with me and touzle me from now till break of day! I conjure thee by Allah, O my lord, sit up and lean against the pillow and sleep not!' Still he made her no answer, but breathed heavily in his sleep. 'Alas! Alas!' continued she. 'Thou art proud in thy beauty and grace and lovely looks! But if thou art handsome, so am I; what then is this thou dost? Have they lessoned thee to flout me or has the wretched old man, my father, made thee swear not to speak to me to-night?' But he opened not his mouth neither awoke, whereat her passion redoubled and God inflamed her heart with love of him. She stole one glance at him that cost her a thousand sighs: her heart fluttered and her entrails yearned and she exclaimed, 'Speak to me, O my lord! O my friend, my beloved, answer me and tell me thy name, for indeed thou hast ravished my wit!' Still he abode drowned in sleep and answered her not a word, and she sighed and said, 'Alas! Alas! why art thou so self-satisfied?' Then she shook him and turning his hand over, saw her ring on his little finger, whereat she cried out and said, with a sigh of passion, 'Alack! Alack! By Allah, thou art my beloved and lovest me! Yet meseems thou turnest away from me out of coquetry, for all thou camest to me whilst I was asleep and knew not what thou

didst, and tookest my ring. But I will not pull it off thy finger.' So saying, she opened the bosom of his shirt and kissed him and put her hand to him, seeking somewhat that she might take as a token, but found nothing. Then she put her hand into his breast, and for the smoothness of his body, it slipped down to his navel and thence to his yard, whereupon her heart ached and her entrails quivered and desire was sore upon her, for that women's lust is fiercer than that of men, and she was confounded. Then she took his ring from his finger and put it on her own and kissed his mouth and hands, nor did she leave any part of him unknissed; after which she took him to her breast and laying one of her hands under his neck and the other under his armpit, fell asleep by his side. Then said Night  
cxxxvi. Maimounch to Dehnesh, 'O accursed one, sawst thou how prudishly and coquettishly my beloved bore himself and what ardour of passion thy mistress showed to him? There can be no doubt that my beloved is handsomer than thine; nevertheless I pardon thee.' Then she wrote him a patent of manumission and said to Keshkesh, 'Help Dehnesh to take up his mistress and carry her back to her own place, for the night wanes apace and there is but little left of it.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Keshkesh. So the two Afrits lifted up the Princess Budour and flying away with her, carried her back to her own place and laid her on her bed, whilst Maimounch abode alone with Kemerezzeman, gazing upon him as he slept, till the night was all but spent, when she went her way.

At break of day, the prince awoke from sleep and turned right and left, but found not the young lady by him and said in himself, 'What is this? It would seem as if my father would fain incline me to marriage with the young lady, that was with me, and have now taken her away by stealth, to the intent that my desire for marriage may redouble.' Then he called out to the eunuch who slept

at the door, saying, 'Out on thee, O accursed one, arise forthright!' So the eunuch arose, dazed with sleep, and brought him basin and ewer, whereupon Kemerezzeman entered the draught-house and did his need; then, coming out, made his ablutions and prayed the morning-prayer, after which he sat telling his beads. Then he looked up, and seeing the eunuch standing waiting upon him, said to him, 'Out on thee, O Sewab! Who was it came hither and took away the young lady from beside me, whilst I slept?' 'O my lord, what young lady?' asked the eunuch. 'She that lay with me last night,' replied Kemerezzeman. The eunuch was troubled at his words and said to him, 'By Allah, there has been with thee neither young lady nor other! How should she have come in to thee, when the door was locked and I asleep before it? By Allah, O my lord, neither man nor woman has come in to thee!' 'Thou liest, O pestilent slave!' exclaimed the prince. 'Dost thou also presume to hoodwink me and wilt thou not tell me what is come of the young lady who lay with me last night and who took her away?' The eunuch was affrighted at him and answered, 'By Allah, O my lord, I have seen neither girl nor boy!' His words only angered Kemerezzeman and he said to him, 'O accursed one, my father hath taught thee deceit! Come hither.' So the eunuch came up to him, and the prince seized him by the collar and threw him to the ground. He let fly a crack of wind, and Kemerezzeman, kneeling upon him, kicked him and throttled him, till he fainted away. Then he tied him to the well-rope, and lowering him into the well, plunged him into the water, then drew him up and plunged him in again. Now it was hard winter weather, and Kemerezzeman ceased not to lower the eunuch into the water and pull him up again, whilst he screamed and called for help. Quoth the prince, 'By Allah, O accursed one, I will not draw thee up out of the well, till thou tell me the story of



the young lady and who it was took her away, whilst I  
 Night slept.' 'O my lord,' answered the eunuch, seeing death  
 elxxvii. staring him in the face, 'let me go and I will tell thee  
 the truth.' So Kemerezzeman pulled him up out of the  
 well, all but dead for cold and wet and torture and  
 beating and fear of drowning. His teeth chattered and  
 he shook like the reed in the hurricane and his clothes  
 were drenched and his body befouled and torn by the  
 rough slimy sides of the well. When Kemerezzeman saw  
 him in this sorry plight, he relented towards him; and  
 as soon as the eunuch found himself on dry land, he  
 said to him, 'O my lord, let me go and put off my clothes  
 and wring them out and spread them in the sun to dry  
 and don others; after which I will return to thee forth-  
 with and tell thee the truth of the matter.' 'O wretched  
 slave,' answered the prince, 'hadst thou not seen death face  
 to face, thou hadst never confessed; but go now and do  
 thy will, and after return speedily and tell me the truth.'  
 So the eunuch went out, hardly crediting his escape,  
 and gave not over running and stumbling, in his haste,  
 till he came in to King Shehriman, whom he found  
 sitting talking with his Vizier of Kemerezzeman's case and  
 saying, 'I slept not last night, for anxiety concerning my  
 son Kemerezzeman, and indeed I fear lest some harm  
 befall him in that old tower. What good was there in  
 imprisoning him?' 'Have no care for him,' answered the  
 Vizier. 'By Allah, no hurt will befall him! Leave him in  
 prison for a month, till his humour yield and his spirit be  
 broken and he return to his senses.' As he spoke, i' came  
 the eunuch, in the aforesaid plight, and said to th King,  
 who was troubled at sight of him, 'O our lord th. Sultan,  
 thy son's wits are fled and he has gone mad; he has dealt  
 with me thus and thus, so that I am become as thou seest,  
 and says, "A young lady lay with me this night and stole  
 away whilst I slept. Where is she?" And insists on my

telling him where she is and who took her away. But I have seen neither girl nor boy; the door was locked all night, for I slept before it, with the key under my head, and opened to him in the morning with my own hand.' When the King heard this, he cried out, saying, 'Alas, my son!' And he was sore enraged against the Vizier, who had been the cause of all this, and said to him, 'Go, bring me news of my son and see what hath befallen his wit.' So the Vizier rose and hastened with the slave to the tower, tumbling over his skirts, in his fear of the King's anger. The sun had now risen and when he came in to Kemerezzeman, he found him sitting on the couch, reading the Koran; so he saluted him and sitting down by his side, said to him, 'O my lord, this wretched slave brought us news that disquieted and alarmed us and incensed the King.' 'And what,' asked Kemerezzeman, 'hath he told you of me, to trouble my father? In good sooth, he hath troubled none but me.' 'He came to us in a sorry plight,' answered the Vizier, 'and told us of thee a thing which God forfend and a lie which it befits not to repeat, may God preserve thy youth and sound wit and eloquent tongue and forbid aught of foul to come from thee!' 'O Vizier,' said the prince, 'what did this pestilent slave say of me?' 'He told us,' replied the Vizier, 'thou hadst taken leave of thy wits and would have it that a young lady lay with thee last night and wast instant with him to tell thee whither she had gone and didst torture him to that end.' When Kemerezzeman heard this, he was sore enraged and said to the Vizier, 'It is manifest to me that you taught the eunuch to do as he did and forbade him to tell me what became of the young lady. But thou, O Vizier, art more reasonable than the eunuch; so do thou tell me forthright whither went the young lady that lay in my bosom last night; for it was you who sent her and bade her sleep in my arms, and we lay together till day; but

Night  
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when I awoke, I found her not. So where is she now?' 'O my lord Kemerezzeman,' said the Vizier, 'the name of God encompass thee! By Allah, we sent none to thee last night, but thou layest alone, with the door locked on thee and the eunuch sleeping before it, nor did there come to thee a young lady or any other. Stablish thy reason, O my lord, and return to thy senses and occupy thy mind no longer [with vain imaginations].' 'O Vizier,' rejoined Kemerezzeman, incensed at his words, 'the young lady in question is my beloved, the fair one with the black eyes and red cheeks, whom I held in my arms all last night.' The Vizier wondered at his words and said to him, 'Didst thou see this damsel with thine eyes and on wake, or in sleep?' 'O wretched old man,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'thinkest thou I saw her with my ears? Indeed, I saw her with my very eyes and on wake and touched her with my hand and watched by her half the night, gazing my fill on her beauty and grace and elegance and lovely looks. But thou hadst schooled her and charged her to speak no word to me; so she feigned sleep and I lay by her side till morning, when I awoke and found her gone.' 'O my lord Kemerezzeman,' rejoined the Vizier, 'surely thou sawest this in thy sleep; it must have been a delusion of dreams or a hallucination caused by eating various kinds of food or a suggestion of the accursed devils.' 'O pestilent old man,' cried the prince, 'wilt thou too make a mock of me and tell me this was an illusion of dreams, when this eunuch confessed to the young lady, saying, "I will return to thee forthwith and tell thee all about her?"' So saying, he sprang up and laying hold of the Vizier's long beard, twisted his hand in it and tugging him off the couch, threw him on the floor. It seemed to the Vizier as though his soul departed his body for the violent plucking at his beard, and Kemerezzeman fell to kicking him and pummelling his breast and sides and cuffing him on the nape, till he

had well-nigh made an end of him. Then said the Vizier in himself, 'I must save myself from this madman by telling him a lie, even as did the eunuch; else he will kill me, for he is mad beyond a doubt.' So he said to Kemerezzeman, 'O my lord, bear me not malice, for indeed thy father charged me to conceal from thee this affair of the young lady; but now I am weak and weary and sore with beating; for I am an old man and lack strength to endure blows. So have a little patience with me and I will tell thee all.' When the prince heard this, he left beating him and said, 'Why couldst thou not tell me without blows and humiliation? Rise now, unlucky old man that thou art, and tell me her story.' Quoth the Vizier, 'Dost thou ask of the young lady with the fair face and perfect shape?' 'Yes,' answered Kemerezzeman. 'Tell me who it was laid her by my side and took her away by night, and let me know whither she is gone, that I may go to her. If my father did this to try me, with a view to our marriage, I consent to marry her and be quit of this trouble; for he only dealt thus with me, because I refused to marry. I say again, I consent to marry: so tell this to my father, O Vizier, and advise him to marry me to her, for I will have none other and my heart loveth her alone. Go now to my father and counsel him to hasten our marriage and bring me his answer forthright.' 'It is well,' rejoined the Vizier, and went out from him, hardly crediting his escape. Then he set off running and stumbling as he went, for excess of affright and agitation, till he came in to the King, who said to him, 'O Vizier, what has befallen thee and who has maltreated thee and how comes it that I see thee thus confounded and terrified?' 'O King,' answered the Vizier, 'I bring thee news.' 'What is it?' asked Shehriman, and the Vizier said, 'Know that thy on Kemerezzeman's wits are gone and that madness hath betided him.' When the King heard this, the



light in his face became darkness and he said, 'Expound to me the nature of my son's madness.' 'O my lord,' answered the Vizier, 'I hear and obey.' Then he told him all that had passed and the King said to him, 'O most ill-omened of Viziers and filthiest of Amirs, know that the reward I will give thee in return for this thy news of my son's madness shall be the cutting off of thy head and the forfeiture of thy goods; for thou hast caused my son's disorder by the wicked and sinister counsel thou hast given me first and last. By Allah, if aught of mischief or madness have befallen him, I will nail thee upon the dome [of the palace] and make thee taste the bitterness of death!' Then rising, he betook himself with the Vizier to the tower, and when Kemerezzeman saw him, he came down to him in haste from the couch on which he sat and kissing his hands, drew back and stood before him awhile, with his eyes cast down and his hands clasped behind him. Then he raised his head and repeated the following verses, whilst the tears streamed down his cheeks:

*If I have borne myself blameworthy to you Or if I've made default in  
that which is your due,*

*I do repent my fault; so let your elemency Th' offender comprehend,  
who doth for pardon sue.*

When the King heard this, he embraced his son and kissing him between the eyes, made him sit by his side on the couch; then turned to the Vizier and looking on him with angry eyes, said to him, 'O dog of a Vizier, why didst thou tell me that my son was mad and make my heart quake for him?' Then he turned to the prince and said to him, 'O my son, what is to-day called?' 'O my father,' answered he, 'to-day is Saturday and to-morrow Sunday: then come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.' 'O my son, O Kemerezzeman,' exclaimed the King, 'praised be God for the preservation of thy reason! What is this present month called in Arabic?'

'Dhoulcaadeh,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'and it is followed by Dhoulhejjeh; then comes Muhherrem, then Sefer, then Rebia the First and Rebia the Second, the two Jumadas, Rejeb, Shaaban, Ramazan and Shewwal.' At this the King rejoiced exceedingly and spat in the Vizier's face, saying, 'O wicked old man, how canst thou pretend that my son is mad? None is mad but thou.' The Vizier shook his head and would have spoken, but bethought himself to wait awhile and see what befell. Then the King said to Kemerezzeman, 'O my son, what is this thou sayest to the eunuch and the Vizier of a fair damsel that lay with thee last night? What damsel is this of whom thou speakest?' Kemerezzeman laughed at his father's words and replied, 'O my father, I can bear no more jesting; so mock me not with another word, for my humour is soured by that you have done with me. Let it suffice thee to know that I consent to marry, but on condition that thou give me to wife her with whom I lay yesternight; for I am assured that it was thou sentest her to me and madest me in love with her, then tookest her away from beside me before the dawn.' 'O my son,' rejoined the King, 'the name of God encompass thee and preserve thy wit from madness! What young lady is this **Night** of whom thou talkest? By Allah, O my son, I know **etc.** nothing of the affair, and I conjure thee, tell me if it be a delusion of sleep or a hallucination caused by food? Doubtless, thou layest down to sleep last night, with thy mind occupied with marriage and troubled with the thought of it (may God curse marriage and the hour in which it occurred to me and him who counselled it!) and dreamtest that a handsome young lady embraced thee and didst fancy thou sawst her on wake; but all this, O my son, is but an illusion of dreams.' 'Leave this talk,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'and swear to me by God, the All-wise Creator, the Humbler of the mighty and the

Destroyer of the Chosroës, that thou knowest nothing of the young lady nor of her abiding-place.' 'By the virtue of the Most High God,' said the King, 'the God of Moses and Abraham, I know nothing of all this and it is assuredly but an illusion of dreams that thou hast seen in sleep.'

Night  
act.

Quoth the prince, 'I will give thee a proof that it was not a dream. Come, let me put a case to thee: did it ever happen to any to dream that he was fighting a sore battle and after to awake and find in his hand a sword besmeared with blood?' 'No, by Allah, O my son,' answered the King, 'this hath never been.' 'I will tell thee what happened to me,' rejoined Kemerezzeman. 'Meseemed I awoke from sleep in the middle of the past night and found a young lady lying by my side, whose shape and favour were as mine. I embraced her and turned her about with my hand and took her ring, which I put on my finger, and she pulled off my ring and put it on her finger. Then I went to sleep by her side, but refrained from her and was ashamed to kiss her on the mouth, deeming that thou hadst sent her to me, with intent to tempt me with her and incline me to marriage, and misdoubting thee to be hidden somewhere whence thou couldst see what I did with her. At point of day, I awoke and found no trace of her, nor could I come at any news of her, and there befell me what thou knowest of with the eunuch and the Vizier. How then can this have been a dream and a delusion, seeing that the ring is a reality? I should indeed have deemed it a dream but for her ring on my finger. Here it is: look at it, O King, and see what is its worth.' So saying, he handed the ring to his father, who examined it and turned it over, then said to his son, 'Verily, there hangs some mighty mystery by this ring and some strange secret. What befell thee last night is indeed a mysterious affair and I know not how this intruder came in upon us. None is the cause of all this trouble save the Vizier; but I con-



jure thee, O my son, to take patience, so haply God may do away this affliction from thee and bring thee complete relief : as quoth one of the poets :

It may be Fate at last shall draw its bridle-rein And bring us happy chance ; for Fortune changes still ;  
And things shall happen yet, despite the things fordone, To further forth my hopes and bring me to my will.

And now, O my son,' added he, 'I am certified that thou art not mad ; but thy case is a strange one, none can unravel it for thee but God the Most High.' 'By Allah, O my father,' cried the prince, 'deal kindly with me and seek out this damsel and hasten her coming to me ; else I shall die of grief.' And he repeated the following verses, in a voice that betrayed the ardour of his passion :

An if thy very promise of union prove untrue, Let but in sleep thy favours the longing lover cheer.

"How can the phantom visit a lover's eyes," quoth they, "From which the grace of slumber is banned and banished sheer?"

And he sighed and wept and groaned aloud from a wounded heart, whilst the tears streamed from his eyes. **Night**  
Then turning to his father, with submission and despondency, he said to him, 'By Allah, O my father, I cannot endure to be parted from her even for an hour.' The King smote hand upon hand and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God, the Most High, the Sublime ! There is no device can profit us in this affair !' Then he took his son by the hand and carried him to the palace, where Kemerezzeman lay down on the bed of languor and the King sat at his head, weeping and mourning over him and leaving him not night or day, till at last the Vizier came in to him and said, 'O King of the age and the time, how long wilt thou remain shut up with thy son and deny thyself to thy troops ? Verily, the order of thy realm is like to be deranged, by reason of thine absence from thy grandees and officers of state. It behoves the man of **cxi.**



understanding, if he have various wounds in his body, to apply him (first) to heal the most dangerous; so it is my counsel to thee that thou transport the prince to the pavilion overlooking the sea and shut thyself up with him there, setting apart Monday and Thursday in every week for state receptions and the transaction of public business. On these days let thine Amirs and Viziers and Chamberlains and deputies and captains and grandees and the rest of the troops and subjects have access to thee and submit their affairs to thee, and do thou their needs and judge between them and give and take with them and command and forbid. The rest of the week thou shalt pass with thy son Kemerezzeman, and thus do till God vouchsafe you both relief. Think not, O King, that thou art exempt from the shifts of fortune and the strokes of calamity; for the wise man is still on his guard, as well saith the poet:

Thou madest fair thy thought of Fate, whenas the days were fair, And  
fearedst not the unknown ills that they to thee might bring.  
The nights were fair and calm to thee; thou wast deceived by them,  
For in the peace of night is born full many a troublous thing.  
O all ye children of mankind, to whom the Fates are kind, Let caution  
ever have a part in all your reckoning.'

The King was struck with the Vizier's words and deemed his counsel wise and timely, fearing lest the order of the state be deranged; so he rose at once and bade carry his son to the pavilion in question, which was built (upon a rock) midmost the water and was approached by a causeway, twenty cubits wide. It had windows on all sides, overlooking the sea; its floor was of variegated marble and its roof was painted in the richest colours and decorated with gold and lapis-lazuli. They furnished it for Kemerezzeman with embroidered rugs and carpets of the richest silk and hung the walls with choice brocades and curtains bespangled with jewels. In the midst they set

him a couch of juniper-wood, inlaid with pearls and jewels, and he sat down thereon, like a man that had been sick twenty years; for the excess of his concern and passion for the young lady had wasted his charms and emaciated his body, and he could neither eat nor drink nor sleep. His father seated himself at his head, mourning sore for him, and every Monday and Thursday he gave his Viziers and Amirs and grandees and officers and the rest of his subjects leave to come in to him in the pavilion. So they entered and did their several service and abode with him till the end of the day, when they went their ways and he returned to his son, whom he left not night nor day; and on this wise did he many days and nights.

To return to the Princess Budour. When the two Afrits carried her back to her palace and laid her on her bed, she slept on till daybreak, when she awoke and sitting up, looked right and left, but saw not the youth who had lain in her bosom. At this, her heart was troubled, her reason fled and she gave a great cry, whereupon all her damsels and nurses and serving-women awoke and came in to her; and the chief of them said to her, 'What ails thee, O my lady?' 'O wretched old woman,' answered the princess, 'where is my beloved, the handsome youth that lay last night in my bosom? Tell me where he is gone.' When the old woman heard this, the light in her eyes became darkness and she was sore in fear of her mischief and said to her, 'O my lady Budour, what unseemly words are these?' 'Out on thee, pestilent crone that thou art!' cried the princess. 'Where is my beloved, the goodly youth with the shining face and the slender shape, the black eyes and the joined eyebrows, who lay with me last night from dusk until near daybreak?' 'By Allah, O my lady,' replied the old woman, 'I have seen no young man nor any other; but I conjure thee, leave this unseemly jesting, lest we be all undone. Belike, it may come to thy father's

**N**ight ears and who shall deliver us from his hand?' 'I tell thee,'  
 cxlii. rejoined Budour, 'there lay a youth with me last night, one  
 of the fairest-faced of men.' 'God preserve thy reason!'  
 exclaimed the nurse. 'Indeed, no one lay with thee last  
 night.' The princess looked at her hand and seeing her  
 own ring gone and Kemerezzeman's ring on her finger in  
 its stead, said to the nurse, 'Out on thee, thou accursed  
 traitress, wilt thou lie to me and tell me that none lay with  
 me last night and forswear thyself to me?' 'By Allah,'  
 replied the nurse, 'I do not lie to thee nor have I sworn  
 falsely!' Her words incensed the princess and drawing  
 a sword she had by her, she smote the old woman with it  
 and slew her; whereupon the eunuch and the waiting-  
 women cried out at her and running to her father, ac-  
 quainted him with her case. So he went to her forthright  
 and said to her, 'O my daughter, what ails thee?' 'O my  
 father,' answered she, 'where is the young man that lay  
 with me last night?' Then her reason left her and she  
 cast her eyes right and left and rent her dress even to the  
 skirt. When the King saw this, he bade the women lay  
 hands on her; so they seized and bound her, then putting  
 a chain of iron about her neck, made her fast to the  
 window and there left her. As for her father, the world  
 was straitened upon him, when he saw what had befallen  
 her, for that he loved her and her case was not a little  
 thing to him. So he summoned the doctors and astrolo-  
 gers and magicians and said to them, 'Whoso cureth my  
 daughter of her disorder, I will marry him to her and give  
 him half my kingdom; but whoso cometh to her and  
 cureth her not, I will strike off his head and hang it over  
 her palace-gate.' Accordingly, all who went in to her, but  
 failed to cure her, he beheaded and hung their heads over  
 her palace-gate, till he had beheaded forty physicians and  
 crucified as many astrologers on her account; wherefore  
 all the folk held aloof from her, for all the physicians



failed to cure her malady and her case was a puzzle to the men of science and the magicians. And as her longing and passion redoubled and love and distraction were sore upon her, she poured forth tears and repeated the following verses :

My longing after thee, my moon, my foeman is ; The thought of thee by night doth comrade with me dwell.

I pass the darksome hours, and in my bosom flames A fire, for heat that's like the very fire of hell.

I'm smitten with excess of ardour and desire ; By which my pain is grown an anguish fierce and fell.

Then she sighed and repeated these also :

My peace on the belovéd ones, where'er they light them down ! I weary for the neighbourhood of those I love, full sore.

My salutation unto you,—not that of taking leave, But greetings of abundant peace, increasing evermore !

For, of a truth, I love you dear and love your land no less ; But woe is me ! I'm far away from that I weary for.

Then she wept till her eyes grew weak and her cheeks pale and withered : and thus she abode three years. Now she had a foster-brother, by name Merzewan, who was absent from her all this time, travelling in far countries. He loved her with an exceeding love, passing that of brothers ; so when he came back, he went in to his mother and asked for his foster-sister the princess Budour. 'Alas, my son,' answered she, 'thy sister has been smitten with madness and has passed these three years, with an iron chain about her neck ; and all the physicians and men of science have failed of curing her.' When he heard this, he said, 'I must needs go in to her ; peradventure I may discover what ails her, and be able to cure her.' 'So be it,' replied his mother ; 'but wait till to-morrow, that I may make shift for thee.' Then she went to the princess's palace and accosting the eunuch in charge of the door, made him a present and said to him, 'I have a married



daughter, who was brought up with thy mistress and is sore concerned for what has befallen her, and I desire of thy favour that my daughter may go in to her and look on her awhile, then return whence she came, and none shall know it.' 'This may not be, except by night,' replied the eunuch, 'after the King has visited the princess and gone away; then come thou and thy daughter.' She kissed the eunuch's hand and returning home, waited till the morrow at nightfall, when she dressed her son in woman's apparel and taking him by the hand, carried him to the palace. When the eunuch saw her, he said, 'Enter, but do not tarry long.' So they went in and when Merzewan saw the princess in the aforesaid plight, he saluted her, after his mother had taken off his woman's attire: then pulling out the books he had brought with him and lighting a candle, he began to recite certain conjurations. The princess looked at him and knowing him, said to him, 'O my brother, thou hast been absent on thy travels and we have been cut off from news of thee.' 'True,' answered he; 'but God has brought me back in safety and I am now minded to set out again; nor has aught delayed me but the sad news I hear of thee; wherefore my heart ached for thee and I came to thee, so haply I may rid thee of thy malady.' 'O my brother,' rejoined she, 'thinkest thou it is madness ails me?' 'Yes,' answered he, and she said, 'Not so, by Allah! It is even as says the poet:

Quoth they, "Thou'rt surely mad for him thou lov'st;" and I replied,

"Indeed the sweets of life belong unto the raving race.

Lo, those who love have not, for that, the upper hand of fate; Only the madman 'tis, I trow, o'ercometh time and space.

Yes, I am mad; so bring me him for whom ye say I'm mad; And if he heal my madness, spare to blame me for my case."

Then she told him that she was in love, and he said, 'Tell me thy story and what befell thee: peradventure

God may discover to me a means of deliverance for thee.' Night  
 'Know then,' said she, 'that one night I awoke from sleep, <sup>xxxv.</sup>  
 in the last watch of the night, and sitting up, saw by my  
 side the handsomest of youths, as he were a willow-wand  
 or an Indian cane, the tongue fails to describe him. Me-  
 thought this was my father's doing to try me, for that he  
 had consulted me, when the kings sought me of him in  
 marriage, and I had refused. It was this idea that with-  
 held me from arousing him, for I thought that if I did  
 aught or embraced him, he would most like tell my father.  
 When I awoke in the morning, I found his ring on my  
 finger in place of my own, which he had taken; and, O  
 my brother, my heart was taken with him at first sight;  
 and for the violence of my passion and longing, I have  
 never since known the taste of sleep and have no occupa-  
 tion save weeping and repeating verses night and day.  
 This, then, O my brother, is the story of the cause of my  
 (pretended) madness.' Then she poured forth tears and  
 repeated the following verses :

Love has banished afar my delight; they are fled With a fawn that  
 hath hearts for a pasturing-stead.  
 To him lovers' blood is a trifle, for whom My soul is a-wasting for  
 passion and dread.  
 I'm jealous for him of my sight and my thought; My heart is a spy on  
 my eyes and my head.  
 His eyelashes dart at us death-dealing shafts; The hearts that they light  
 on are ruined and dead.  
 Whilst yet there is left me a share in the world, Shall I see him, I  
 wonder, or ever I'm sped?  
 I fain would conceal what I suffer for him; 'Tis shown to the spy by  
 the tears that I shed.  
 When near, his enjoyment is distant from me: But his image is near,  
 when afar he doth tread.

'See then, O my brother,' added 'she, 'how thou mayest  
 aid me in this my affliction.' Merzewan bowed his head  
 awhile, marvelling and knowing not what to do, then

raised it and said to her, 'I believe all thou hast said to be true, though the case of the young man passes my imagination: but I will go round about all countries and seek for what may heal thee; peradventure God shall appoint thy deliverance to be at my hand. Meanwhile, take patience and be not disquieted.' So saying, he took leave of her, after he had prayed that she might be vouchsafed constancy, and left her repeating the following verses:

Thine image in my thoughts fares as a pilgrim aye, For all thy stead and mine are distant many a day.

The wishes of my heart do bring thee near to me For 'gainst the speed of thought what is the levin's ray?

Depart thou not, that art the lustre of mine eyes; Yea, when thou'rt far removed, all void of light are they.

He returned to his mother's house, where he passed the night, and on the morrow, after furnishing himself for his journey, he set out and travelled from city to city and from island to island for a whole month. Everywhere he heard talk of the princess Budour's madness, till he came to a city named Teyreb and seeking news of the townsfolk, so haply he might light on a cure for his foster-sister's malady, heard that Kemerezzeman, son of King Shehri-man, was fallen sick and afflicted with melancholy madness. He enquired the name of this prince's capital and was told that it stood on the Islands of Khalidan and was distant thence a whole month's journey by sea and six by land. So he took passage in a ship that was bound thither, and they sailed with a favouring breeze for a whole month, till they came in sight of the city and there remained for them but to enter the harbour; when there came out on them a tempestuous wind which carried away the masts and rent the canvas, so that the sails fell into the sea and the ship foundered, with all on board. Each  
 Night  
 each. looked to himself, and as for Merzewan, the current carried

him under the King's palace, wherein was Kemerezzeman. As fate would have it, it was the day on which the King gave audience to his grandees and officers, and he was sitting, with his son's head in his lap, whilst an eunuch whisked away the flies. The prince had not spoken, neither had he eaten nor drunk for two days, and he was grown thinner than a spindle. Now the Vizier was standing near the window giving on the sea and raising his eyes, saw Merzewan at the last gasp for struggling with the waves; whereupon his heart was moved to pity for him and he drew near to the King and said to him, 'O King, I crave thy leave to go down to the court of the pavilion and open the water-gate, that I may rescue a man who is at the point of drowning in the sea and bring him forth of peril into deliverance; peradventure, on this account, God may ease thy son of his affliction.' 'O Vizier,' replied Shehri-man, enough is that which has befallen my son through thee and on thine account. Belike, if thou rescue this drowning man, he will look on my son and come to know our affairs and exult over me; but I swear by Allah, that, if he come hither and see my son and after go out and speak of our secrets to any, I will assuredly strike off thy head before his; for thou art the cause of all that hath befallen us, first and last. Now do as thou wilt.' The Vizier rose and opening the postern, descended to the causeway; then walked on twenty steps and came to the sea, where he saw Merzewan nigh unto death. So he put out his hand to him and catching him by the hair of his head, drew him ashore, in a state of unconsciousness, with belly full of water and eyes starting from his head. The Vizier waited till he came to himself, when he pulled off his wet clothes and clad him in a fresh suit, covering his head with one of his servants' turbans; after which he said to him, 'I have been the means of saving thee from drowning: do not thou requite me by causing my death



and thine own.' 'How so?' asked Merzewan; and the Vizier answered, 'Thou art now about to go up and pass among Amirs and Viziers, all silent and speaking not, because of Kemerezzeman, the King's son.' When Merzewan heard the name of Kemerezzeman, he knew that this was he of whom he came in search, but he feigned ignorance and said to the Vizier, 'And who is Kemerezzeman?' Quoth the Vizier, 'He is the King's son and lies sick on his couch, restless, eating not nor drinking neither sleeping night nor day; indeed he is nigh upon death and we have lost hope of his recovery. Beware lest thou look too long on him or on any place other than that where thou settest thy feet: else thou art a lost man and I also.' 'O Vizier,' said Merzewan, 'I conjure thee by Allah, tell me of thy favour, the cause of this youth's malady.' 'I know none,' answered the Vizier, 'save that, three years ago, his father pressed him to marry, but he refused; whereat the King was wroth and imprisoned him. On the morrow, he would have it that he had had, for a bedfellow, the night before, a young lady of surpassing beauty, begging description, with whom he had exchanged rings; but we know not the meaning of all this. So by Allah, O my son, when thou comest up into the palace, look not on the prince, but go thy way; for the King's heart is full of anger against me.' 'By Allah,' said Merzewan in himself, 'this is he whom I sought!' Then he followed the Vizier up to the palace, where the latter seated himself at the prince's feet; but Merzewan must needs go up to Kemerezzeman and stand before him, gazing on him. At this, the Vizier was like to die of affright and signed to Merzewan to go his way; but he feigned not to see him and gave not over gazing upon Kemerezzeman, till he was

Night  
cxviii. assured that it was indeed he of whom he was in search. Then, 'Glory be to God,' cried he, 'who hath made his shape even as her shape and his complexion as her com-

plexion and his cheek as her cheek !' At this Kemerez-zeman opened his eyes and gave ear to his speech ; and when Merzewan saw him listening, he repeated the following verses :

I see thee full of song and plaint and ecstasy amain, And to the setting  
forth in words of charms I find thee fain.  
Can it be love hath wounded thee or art thou shot with shafts ? For sure  
these fashions but belong unto a smitten swain.  
Ho, pour me out full cups of wine and sing me eke, in praise Of Tenam,  
Suleyma, Rebāb,<sup>1</sup> a glad and lovesome strain !  
Yea, let the grape-vine's sun<sup>2</sup> go round, whose mansion is its jar, Whose  
East the cupbearer and West my thirsty mouth I feign.  
I'm jealous of the very clothes she dights upon her side, For that upon  
her body soft and delicate they've lain ;  
And eke I'm envious of the cups that touch her dainty lips, When to the  
kissing-place she sets them ever and again.  
Think not that I in anywise with sword am done to death ; 'Tis by the  
arrows of a glance, alack ! that I am slain.  
Whenas we met again, I found her fingers dyed with red, As 'twere the  
juice of tragacanth had steeped them in its stain.  
Said I to her, " Thou'st dyed thy palms,<sup>3</sup> whilst I was far away. This  
then is how the slave of love is 'quited for his pain."  
Quoth she (and cast into my heart the flaming fires of love, Speaking as  
one who hath no care love's secret to contain),  
" No, by thy life, this is no dye I've used ! So haste thou not To heap  
accusings on my head and slander me in vain.  
For, when I saw thee get thee gone upon our parting day, My eyes, for  
very dreariment, with tears of blood did rain.  
I wiped them with my hand, and so my fingers with my blood Were all  
to-reddened and do yet their ruddy tint retain."  
Had I for very passion wept, or e'er my mistress did, I should, before  
repentance came, have solaced heart and brain ;  
But she before my weeping wept ; her tears drew mine and so Quoth I,  
" Unto the precedent the merit doth pertain."  
Chide not at me for loving her, for by Love's self I swear, My heart  
with anguish for her sake is well-nigh cleft in twain.

<sup>1</sup> Women's names.

<sup>2</sup> Wine.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.* by way of ornament.

I weep for one whose face is decked by Beauty's self; there's none,  
 Arab or foreigner, to match with her, in hill or plain.  
 The lore of Locman<sup>1</sup> hath my love and Mary's chastity, with Joseph's  
 loveliness to boot and David's songful vein;  
 Whilst Jacob's grief to me belongs and Jonah's dreariment, Ay, and  
 Job's torment and despite and Adam's plight of bane.  
 Slay ye her not, although I die for love of her, but ask, How came it  
 lawful unto her to shed my blood in vain.

When Kemerezzeman heard these verses, they brought refreshment and healing to his heart, and he sighed and turning his tongue in his mouth, said to the King, 'O my  
 Night father, let this young man come and sit by my side.' The  
 cxviii. King, hearing these words from his son, rejoiced exceedingly, though at the first he had been wroth with Merzewan and thought in himself to have stricken off his head: but when he heard Kemerezzeman speak, his anger left him and he arose and drawing Merzewan to him, made him sit down by his son and said to him, 'Praised be God for thy safety!' 'May God bless thee,' answered Merzewan, 'and preserve thy son to thee!' Then said the King, 'From what country comest thou?' 'From the Islands of the Inland Sea,' replied he, 'the kingdom of King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the seas and the Seven Palaces.' Quoth the King, 'Maybe thy coming shall be blessed to my son and God vouchsafe to heal him of his malady.' 'God willing,' rejoined Merzewan, 'all shall yet be well.' Then turning to Kemerezzeman, he said to him in his ear, unheard of the King and his court, 'Be of good cheer, O my lord, and take heart and courage. As for her for whose sake thou art thus, ask not of her condition on thine account. Thou kepest thy secret and fellest sick, but she discovered hers and they said she was mad; and she is now in prison, with an iron chain about her neck, in most piteous case; but, God willing, the healing of

<sup>1</sup> The well-known semi-legendary sage and fabulist.

both of you shall be at my hand.' When Kemerezzeman heard this, his life returned to him and he took heart and courage and signed to his father to help him sit up; at which the King was like to lose his reason for joy and lifting him up, set two pillows for him to lean upon. Then, of his fear for his son, he shook the handkerchief of dismissal and all the Amirs and Viziers withdrew; after which he bade perfume the palace with saffron and decorate the city, saying to Merzewan, 'By Allah, O my son, thou hast a lucky and a blessed aspect!' And he made much of him and called for food, which when they brought, Merzewan said to the prince, 'Come, eat with me.' So he obeyed him and ate with him, while the King called down blessings on Merzewan and said, 'How auspicious is thy coming, O my son!' When he saw Kemerezzeman eat, his joy redoubled and he went out and told the prince's mother and the people of the palace. Then he let call abroad the good news of the prince's recovery and proclaimed the decoration of the city: so the people rejoiced and decorated the city and it was a day of high festival. Merzewan passed the night with Kemerezzeman, and the King also slept with them, in the excess of his joy for his son's recovery. Next morning, when the King had gone away and the two young men were left alone, Kemerezzeman told Merzewan his story from first to last and the latter said to him, 'I know her with whom thou didst foregather; her name is the princess Budour and she is daughter to King Ghaïour.' Then he told him all that had befallen the princess and acquainted him with the excessive love she bore him, saying, 'All that befell thee with thy father hath befallen her with hers, and thou art without doubt her beloved, even as she is thine; so brace up thy resolution and take heart, for I will bring thee to her and unite you both anon and deal with you even as saith the poet:

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ccix.



Though to the lover adverse be the fair And drive him with her rigour  
to despair,  
Yet will I soon unite them, even as I The pivot of a pair of scissors were.

And he went on to comfort and hearten Kemerezzeman and urged him to eat and drink, cheering him and diverting him with talk and song and stories, till he ate food and drank wine and life and strength returned to him. In good time he became free of his disorder and stood up and sought to go to the bath. So Merzewan took him by the  
 Night  
 cc. hand and carried him to the bath, where they washed their bodies and made them clean. When his father heard of this, in his joy he freed the prisoners and gave alms to the poor; moreover he bestowed splendid dresses of honour upon his grantees and let decorate the city seven days. Then said Merzewan to Kemerezzeman, 'Know, O my lord, that the sole object of my journey hither was to deliver the princess Budour from her present strait; and it remains but for us to devise how we may get to her, since thy father cannot brook the thought of parting with thee. So it is my counsel that to-morrow thou ask his leave to go a-hunting, saying, "I have a mind to divert myself with hunting in the desert and to see the open country and pass the night there." Then do thou take with thee a pair of saddle-bags full of gold and mount a swift hackney and I will do the like; and we will take each a spare horse. Suffer not any servant to follow us, for as soon as we reach the open country, we will go our ways.' Kemerezzeman rejoiced mightily in this plan and said, 'It is good.' Then he took heart and going in to his father, sought his leave to go out to hunt, saying as Merzewan had taught him. The King consented and said, 'O my son, a thousandfold blessed be the day that restores thee to health! I will not gainsay thee in this; but pass not more than one night in the desert and return to me on the morrow; for thou knowest that life is not good

to me without thee, and indeed I can hardly as yet credit thy recovery, because thou art to me as he of whom quoth the poet :

Though Solomon his carpet were mine both day and night, Though the Chosroës' empire, yea, and the world were mine,  
All were to me in value less than a midge's wing, Except mine eyes still rested upon that face of thine.'

Then he equipped the prince and Merzewan for the excursion, bidding make them ready four horses, together with a dromedary to carry the money and a camel for the water and victuals ; and Kemerezzeman forbade any of his attendants to follow him. His father bade him farewell and pressed him to his breast and kissed him, saying, 'I conjure thee by Allah, be not absent from me more than one night, wherein sleep will be denied me, for I am even as saith the poet :

Thy presence with me is my heaven of delight And my hell of affliction  
the loss of thy sight.

My soul be thy ransom ! If love be my crime For thee, my offence, of a truth, is not light.

Doth passion blaze up in thy heart like to mine ? I suffer the torments of hell day and night.'

'O my father,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'God willing, I will lie but one night abroad.' Then he took leave of him, and he and Merzewan mounted and taking with them the dromedary and camel, rode out into the open country. They drew not bridle from the first of the day till night-fall, when they halted and ate and drank and fed their beasts and rested awhile ; after which they again took horse and fared on three days, till they came to a spacious wooded tract. Here they alighted and Merzewan, taking the camel and one of the horses, slaughtered them and cut the flesh off their bones. Then he took from Kemerezzeman his shirt and trousers and cassock and tearing them in shreds, smeared them with the horse's blood and

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cc.

cast them down in the fork of the road. Then they ate and drank and taking horse set forward again. 'O my brother,' said Kemerezzeman, 'what is this thou hast done and how will it profit us?' 'Know,' answered Merzewan, 'that thy father, when he finds that we have outstayed the night for which we had his leave, will mount and follow in our track till he comes hither; and when he sees the blood and thy clothes torn and bloodied, he will deem thee to have been slain of highway robbers or wild beasts; so he will give up hope of thee and return to his city, and by this devise we shall gain our end.' 'By Allah,' said Kemerezzeman, 'this is indeed a rare device! Thou hast done well.' Then they fared on days and nights and Kemerezzeman did nought but weep and complain, till they drew near their journey's end, when he rejoiced and repeated the following verses:

Wilt thou be harsh to a over, who's never unmindful of thee, And wilt  
thou now cast him away to whom thou wast fain heretofore?

May I forfeit the favour of God, if I ever was false to thy love! Abandon-  
ment punish my crime, if I've broken the vows that I swore!

But no, I've committed no crime, that calleth for rigour from thee; Or,  
if in good sooth I'm at fault, I bring thee repentance therefor.

Of the marvels of Fortune it is that thou shouldst abandon me thus;  
But Fortune to bring to the light fresh marvels will never give o'er.

When he had made an end of these verses, Merzewan said to him, 'See, yonder are King Ghaïour's Islands.' Whereat Kemerezzeman rejoiced with an exceeding joy and thanked him for what he had done and strained him to his bosom and kissed him between the eyes. They entered the city and took up their lodging at a khan, where they rested three days from the fatigues of the journey; after which Merzewan carried Kemerezzeman to the bath and clothing him in a merchant's habit, provided him with a geomantic tablet of gold, a set of astrological instruments and an astrolabe of silver, plated with gold. Then he said to him,

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ccii.



‘Go, O my lord, stand before the King’s palace and cry out, “I am the mathematician, I am the scribe, I am he that knows the Sought and the Seeker, I am the skilled physician, I am the accomplished astrologer! Where then is he that seeketh?” When the King hears this, he will send after thee and carry thee in to his daughter the princess Budour, thy mistress: but do thou say to him, “Grant me three days’ delay, and if she recover, give her to me to wife, and if not, deal with me as with those who came before me.” If he agree to this, as soon as thou art alone with her, discover thyself to her; and when she knows thee, her madness will cease from her and she will be made whole in one night. Then do thou give her to eat and drink, and her father, rejoicing in her recovery, will marry thee to her and share his kingdom with thee, according to the condition he hath imposed on himself: and so peace be on thee.’ ‘May I never lack thine excellence!’ replied Kemerezzeman, and taking the instruments aforesaid, sallied forth of the khan and took up his station before King Ghaïour’s palace, where he began to cry out, saying, ‘I am the scribe, I am the mathematician, he that knows the Sought and the Seeker, I am he who makes calculations for marriage contracts, who draws horoscopes, interprets dreams and traces the magical characters by which hidden treasures are discovered! Where then is the seeker?’ When the people of the city heard this, they flocked to him, for it was long since they had seen a scribe or an astrologer, and stood round him, wondering at his beauty and grace and perfect symmetry. Presently one of them accosted him and said, ‘God on thee, O fair youth with the eloquent tongue, cast not thyself into perdition, in thy desire to marry the princess Budour! Do but look on yonder heads hung up; they are all those of men who have lost their lives in this same venture.’ He paid no heed to them, but cried out at the top of his voice,



saying, 'I am the doctor, the scribe! I am the astrologer, the mathematician!' And all the townsfolk forbade him from this, but he heeded them not, saying in himself, 'None knoweth desire save he who suffereth it.' Then he began again to cry his loudest, saying, 'I am the scribe, **Night** I am the mathematician, I am the astrologer!' till all the **civil** townsfolk were wroth with him and said to him, 'Thou art but a silly self-willed boy! Have pity on thine own youth and tender years and beauty and grace.' But he cried all the more, 'I am the astrologer, I am the mathematician! Is there any one that seeketh?' As he was thus crying and the people remonstrating with him, King Ghaïour heard his voice and the clamour of the folk and said to his Vizier, 'Go down and bring me yon astrologer.' So the Vizier went down and taking Kemerezzeman from the midst of the crowd, carried him up to the King, before whom he kissed the earth, repeating the following verses:

Eight elements of high renown are all comprised in thee; By them may Fortune never cease thy bounden slave to be!

Munificence and knowledge sure, glory and piety, Fair fluent speech and eloquence and might and victory.

When the King saw him, he made him sit down by his side and said to him, 'By Allah, O my son, an thou be not an astrologer, venture not thy life nor submit thyself to my condition; for I have bound myself to strike off the head of whoso goeth in to my daughter and healeth her not of her disorder; but him who healeth her I will marry to her. So let not thy beauty and grace delude thee; for, by Allah, if thou cure her not, I will assuredly cut off thy head!' 'I knew of this condition before I came hither,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'and am ready to abide by it.' Then King Ghaïour took the Cadis to witness against him and delivered him to an eunuch, saying, 'Carry this fellow to the lady Budour.' So the eunuch took him by the hand and led him along the gallery; but Kemerezzeman out-

went him and pushed on before, whilst the eunuch ran after him, saying, 'Out on thee! Hasten not to destroy thyself. By Allah, never yet saw I astrologer so eager for his own destruction: thou knowest not the calamities that await thee.' But Kemerezzeman turned away his face and repeated the following verses:

A learned man, I'm ignorant before thy beauties bright; Indeed, I know not what I say, confounded at thy sight.

If I compare thee to the sun, thou passest not away, Whilst the sun setteth from the sky and fails anon of light.

Perfect, indeed, thy beauties are; they stupefy the wise Nor ev'n the eloquent avail to praise thy charms aright.

The eunuch stationed Kemerezzeman behind the curtain of the princess's door and the prince said to him, 'Whether of the two wilt thou liefer have me do, cure thy lady from here or go in and cure her within the curtain?' The eunuch marvelled at his words and answered, 'It were more to thine honour to cure her from here.' So Kemerezzeman sat down behind the curtain and taking out pen and inkhorn and paper, wrote the following: 'This is the letter of one whom passion torments and whom desire consumes and sorrow and misery destroy; one who despairs of life and looks for nothing but death, whose mourning heart has neither comforter nor helper, whose sleepless eyes have none to succour them against affliction, whose day is passed in fire and his night in torment, whose body is wasted for much emaciation and there comes to him no messenger from his beloved:

I write with a heart devoted to thee and the thought of thee And an eyelid, wounded for weeping tears of the blood of me.

And a body that love and affliction and passion and long desire Have clad with the garment of leanness and wasted utterly.

I plain me to thee of passion, for sore hath it baffled me Nor is there a corner left me where patience yet may be.

Wherefore, have mercy, I prithee, show favour unto me, For my heart, my heart is breaking for love and agony.

The cure of hearts is union with the beloved and whom his love maltreateth, God is his physician. If either of us have broken faith, may the false one fail of his desire! There is nought goodlier than a lover who is faithful to a cruel beloved one.' Then, for a subscription, he wrote, 'From the distracted and despairing lover, him whom love and longing disquiet, from the captive of passion and transport, Kemerezzeman, son of Shehriman, to the peerless beauty, the pearl of the fair Houris, the Lady Budour, daughter of King Ghaïour. Know that by night I am wakeful and by day distraught, consumed with ever-increasing wasting and sickness and longing and love, abounding in sighs, rich in floods of tears, the prisoner of passion, the slain of desire, the debtor of longing, the boon-companion of sickness, he whose heart absence hath seared. I am the sleepless one, whose eyes close not, the slave of love, whose tears run never dry, for the fire of my heart is still unquenched and the flaming of my longing is never hidden.' Then in the margin he wrote this admired verse :

Peace from the stores of the grace of my Lord be rife On her in whose  
hand are my heart and soul and life !

And also these :

Vouchsafe thy converse unto me some little, so, perchance, Thou mayst  
have ruth on me or else my heart be set at ease.

Yea, for the transport of my love and longing after thee, Of all I've  
suffered I make light and all my miseries.

God guard a folk whose dwelling-place is far removed from mine, The  
secret of whose love I've kept in many lands and seas !

But fate, at last, hath turned on me a favourable face And on my loved  
one's threshold-earth hath cast me on my knees.

Budour beside me in the bed I saw and straight my moon, Lit by her  
sun, shone bright and blithe upon my destinies.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Playing upon his own name, Kemerezzeman, which means, "Moon of the time or of fortune." Budour means "Full moons."

Then by way of subscription, he wrote the following verses :

Ask of my letter what my pen hath written, and the scroll Will tell the passion and the pain that harbour in my soul.

My hand, what while my tears rain down, writes and desire makes moan Unto the paper by the pen of all my weary dole.

My tears roll ever down my cheeks and overflow the page ; Nay, I'd ensue them with my blood, if they should cease to roll.

And at the end he added this other verse :

I send thee back herewith the ring I took whilere of thee, Whenas we companied ; so send me that thou hadst of me.

Then he folded up Budour's ring inside the letter and sealing it, gave it to the eunuch, who went in with it to the princess. She took it from him and opening it, found in it her own ring. Then she read the letter and when she understood its purport and knew that her beloved stood behind the curtain, her reason fled and her breast dilated for joy ; and she repeated the following verses :

Long, long have I bewailed the sev'rance of our loves, With tears that from my lids streamed down like burning rain,

And vowed that, if the days should reunite us two, My lips should never speak of severance again.

Joy hath o'erwhelmed me so that, for the very stress Of that which gladdens me, to weeping I am fain.

Tears are become to you a habit, O my eyes, So that ye weep as well for gladness as for pain.

Then she rose and setting her feet to the wall, strained with all her might upon the iron collar, till she broke it from her neck and snapped the chains ; then going forth, she threw herself on Kemerezzeman and kissed him on the mouth, like a pigeon billing. And she embraced him with all the stress of her love and longing and said to him, 'O my lord, do I wake or sleep and has God indeed vouchsafed us reunion after separation ? Praised be He who hath reknit our loves, after despair !' When the



eunuch saw this, he ran to King Ghaïour and kissing the earth before him, said, 'O my lord, know that this is indeed the prince and paragon of astrologers; for he hath cured thy daughter from behind the curtain, without going in to her.' 'Look to it well,' said the King; 'is this news true?' 'O my lord,' answered the eunuch, 'come and see for thyself how she hath found strength to break the iron chains and is come forth to the astrologer, kissing and embracing him.' So the King arose and went in to his daughter, who, when she saw him, rose and covered her face, reciting the following verses :

I love not the toothstick; 'tis hateful to me, For I, when I name it, say,  
"Other than thee."<sup>1</sup>

But I love, notwithstanding, the capparis-tree, For, whenas I name it I  
say, "Thee I see."<sup>2</sup>

The King was transported for joy at her recovery and kissed her between the eyes, for he loved her very dearly; then turning to Kemerezzeman, he asked him who he was and whence he came. The prince told him his name and rank and that he was the son of King Shehriman, and related to him the whole story from beginning to end; whereat Ghaïour marvelled and said, 'Verily, your story deserves to be recorded in books and read after you, generation after generation.' Then he summoned Cadis and witnesses forthright and married the two lovers; after which he bade decorate the city seven days long. So they decorated the city and held high festival, and all the troops donned their richest clothes, whilst the drums beat and the criers announced the glad tidings. Then they spread the tables with all manner meats and unveiled the princess before Kemerezzeman, and behold, each was like unto the other in beauty and elegance and amorous grace. So

<sup>1</sup> *Sivaka*, a toothstick, (acc.) means also "other than thee."

<sup>2</sup> *Araka*, a capparis-tree, (acc.) means also, "I see thee." Toothsticks are made of the wood of this tree.

the King rejoiced in the issue of her affair and in her marriage and praised God for that He had made her to fall in love with a goodly youth of the sons of the kings. Then Kemerezzeman went in to her and lay with her that night and took his will of her, whilst she in like manner fulfilled her desire of him and enjoyed his beauty and grace; and they clipped each other till the morning. On the morrow, the King made a banquet and spreading the tables with the richest meats, kept open house a whole month to all comers from the Islands of the Inner and the Outer Seas. Now, when Kemerezzeman had thus attained his desire and had tarried awhile with the princess Budour, he bethought him of his father and saw him in a dream, saying, 'O my son, is it thus thou dealest with me?' and reciting the following verses:

The moon o' the dark by his neglect my spirit doth appal And to the  
watching of his stars hath made my eyelids thrall.  
But soft, my heart ! It may be yet he will return to thee ; And patience,  
soul, beneath the pain he's smitten thee withal !

Kemerezzeman awoke in the morning, afflicted and troubled at what he had seen, whereupon the princess questioned him and he told her his dream. Then they both went in to King Ghaïour and telling him what had passed, besought his leave to depart. He gave the prince the leave he sought; but the princess said, 'O my father, I cannot endure to be parted from him.' Quoth Ghaïour, 'Then go thou with him,' and gave her leave to be absent a whole year, charging her to visit him once in every year thereafterward. So she kissed his hand and Kemerezzeman did the like; after which he proceeded to equip them for the journey, furnishing them with horses and dromedaries of choice and a litter for his daughter, besides mules and camels laden with victual and all manner of travelling gear. Moreover, he gave them slaves and eunuchs to serve them and bestowed on Kemerezzeman ten splendid

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suits of cloth of gold, embroidered with jewels, together with a treasury<sup>1</sup> of money and ten riding horses and as many she-camels. When the day of departure arrived, the King accompanied them to the farthest limits of his islands, where, going in to his daughter Budour in the litter, he kissed her and strained her to his bosom, weeping and repeating the following verses :

O thou that seekest parting, stay thy feet, For sure embraces are a lover's right.

Softly, for fortune's nature is deceit And parting is the end of love-delight.

Then, leaving her, he kissed her husband and commended his daughter to his care ; after which he bade him farewell and giving the signal for departure, returned to his capital with his troops. The prince and princess and their suite fared on without stopping a whole month, at the end of which time they came to a spacious champaign, abounding in pasturage, where they alighted and pitched their tents. They ate and drank and rested, and the princess Budour lay down to sleep. Presently, Kemer-ezzeman went in to her and found her lying asleep, in a shift of apricot-coloured silk, that showed all it should have covered, and a coif of cloth of gold embroidered with pearls and jewels. The breeze raised her shift and showed her breasts and navel and a belly whiter than snow, each one of whose dimples contained an ounce of benzoin ointment.<sup>2</sup> At this sight, his love and passion for her redoubled, and he recited the following verses :

If, whilst within my entrails the fires of hell did stir And flames raged high about me, 'twere spoken in my ear,

"Which wilt thou have the rather, a draught of water cold Or sight of her thou lovest?" I'd say, "The sight of her."

<sup>1</sup> A treasury of money is a thousand purses or about £5,000.

<sup>2</sup> This expression is of course metaphorical. Cf. Solomon's Song *passim*.

Then he put his hand to the ribbon of her trousers and drew it and loosed it, for that his soul lusted after her, when he saw a jewel, red as dragon's blood,<sup>1</sup> made fast to the band. He untied and examined it and seeing two lines of writing graven thereon, in a character not to be read, marvelled and said in himself, 'Except she set great store by this, she had not tied it to the ribbon of her trousers nor hidden it in the most private place about her person, that she might not be parted from it. I wonder what she doth with it and what is the secret that is in it.' So saying, he took it and went without the tent to look at it in the light; but as he was examining it, a bird swooped down on him and snatching it from his hand, flew off with it and lighted on the ground at a little distance. Fearing to lose the talisman, he ran after the bird; but it flew on before him, keeping just out of his reach, and drew him on from place to place and from hill to hill, till the night came on and the air grew dark, when it roosted on a high tree. Kemerezzeman stopped under the tree, confounded and faint for hunger and weariness, and giving himself up for lost, would have turned back, but knew not the way, for the darkness had overtaken him. So he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' and lying down under the tree, slept till the morning, when he awoke and saw the bird also awake and fly away. He arose and walked after it, and it flew on little by little before him, after the measure of his going; at which he smiled and said, 'By Allah, this is a strange thing! Yesterday, the bird flew before me as fast as I could run; and to-day, knowing that I am tired and cannot run, it flieth after the measure of my walking. By Allah, this is wonderful! But, whether it lead me to my death or to my life, I must needs follow it, wherever it goeth, for it will surely not abide save in some inhabited land. So he

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twil.

<sup>1</sup> i.e. gum tragacanth.



followed the bird, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of its waters, for ten days' space, and every night the bird roosted on a tree. At the end of this time, he came in sight of an inhabited city, whereupon the bird darted off like the glance of the eye and entering the town, was lost to view : and Kemerezzeman marvelled at this and exclaimed, 'Praised be God, who hath brought me hither in safety !' Then he sat down by a stream and washed his hands and feet and face and rested awhile : and recalling his late easy and pleasant life of union with his beloved and contrasting it with his present plight of trouble and weariness and hunger and strangerhood and severance, the tears streamed from his eyes and he repeated the following cinquains :

I strove to hide the load that love on me did lay ; In vain, and sleep for me is changed to wake alway.

Whenas wanhope doth press my heart both night and day, I cry aloud,  
"O Fate, hold back thy hand, I pray.

For all my soul is sick with dolour and dismay !"

If but the Lord of Love were just indeed to me, Sleep had not fled mine eyes by his unkind decree.

Have pity, sweet, on one that is for love of thee Worn out and wasted sore ; once rich and great was he,

Now beggared and cast down by love from his array.

The railers chide at thee full sore ; I heed not, I, But stop my ears to them and give them back the lie.

"Thou lov'st a slender one," say they ; and I reply, "I've chosen her and left all else beneath the sky."

Enough ; when fate descends, the eyes are blinded aye.

**Night** As soon as he was rested, he rose and walked on, little  
**twiii.** by little, till he came to the city-gate and entered, knowing not whither he should go. He traversed the city from end to end, without meeting any of the townsfolk, entering by the land-gate and faring on till he came out at the sea-gate, for the city stood on the sea-shore. Presently, he found himself among the orchards and gardens of the place and passed among the trees, till he came to a garden-gate

and stopped before it, whereupon the keeper came out to him and saluted him. The prince returned his greeting and the other bade him welcome, saying, 'Praised be God that thou hast come off safe from the people of the city! Quick, come into the garden, ere any of the townfolk see thee.' So Kemerezzeman entered the garden, amazed, and said to the keeper, 'Who and what then are the people of this city?' 'Know,' answered the other, 'that the people of this city are all Magians: but, God on thee, tell me how and why thou camest hither.' Accordingly, Kemerezzeman told him all that had befallen him, at which the gardener marvelled greatly and said, 'Know, O my son, that from this place to the cities of Islam is four months' journey by sea and a whole year by land. We have a ship that sails yearly hence with merchandise to the Ebony Islands, which are the nearest Muslim country, and thence to the Khalidan Islands, the dominions of King Shehri-man.' Kemerezzeman considered awhile and concluding that he could not do better than abide with the gardener and become his assistant, said to him, 'Wilt thou take me into thy service, to help thee in this garden?' 'Willingly,' answered the gardener and clothing him in a short blue gown, that reached to his knees, taught him to lead the water to the roots of the trees. So Kemerezzeman abode with him, watering the trees and hoeing up the weeds and weeping floods of tears; for he had no rest day or night, by reason of his strangerhood and separation from his beloved, and he ceased not to repeat verses upon her, amongst others the following:

**Ye made us a promise of yore; will ye not to your promise be true? Ye spoke us a word aforetime; as ye spoke to us, will ye not do?**  
**We waken, whilst ye are asleep, according to passion's decree; So have ye the vantage of us, for watchers and sleepers are two.**  
**We vowed to each other, whilere, that we would keep secret our loves; But the breedbate possessed you to speak, and you spoke and revealed what none knew.**

Belovéd in pleasure and pain, chagrin and contentment alike, Whate'er  
 may betide, ye alone are the goal that my wishes ensue.  
 There's one that still holdeth a heart, a heart sore tormented of mine;  
 Ah, would she'd have ruth on my plight and pity the soul that  
 she slew!

Not every one's eye is as mine, worn wounded and cankered with tears,  
 And hearts that are, even as mine, the bondslaves of passion  
 are few.

Ye acted the tyrant with me, saying, "Love is a tyrant, I trow." Indeed,  
 ye were right, and the case has proved what ye said to be true.

Alack! They've forgotten outright a passion-distraught one, whose faith  
 Time 'minisheth not, though the fires in his entrails rage ever anew.

If my foeman in love be my judge, to whom shall I make my complaint?  
 To whom of injustice complain, to whom for redress shall I sue?

Were it not for my needling of love and the ardour that burns in my  
 breast, I had not a heart love-enslaved and a soul that for passion  
 must rue.

To return to the princess Budour. When she awoke, she sought her husband and found him not: then she saw the ribbon of her trousers undone and the talisman missing and said to herself, 'By Allah, this is strange! Where is my husband? It would seem as if he had taken the talisman and gone away, knowing not the secret that is in it. Whither can he have gone? It must have been some extraordinary matter that drew him away, for he cannot brook to leave me an hour. May God curse the talisman and its hour!' Then she considered awhile and said in herself, 'If I go out and tell the servants that my husband is lost, they will covet me: I must use stratagem.' So she rose and donned some of her husband's clothes and boots and spurs and a turban like his, drawing the loose end across her face for a chin-band. Then setting a slave-girl in her litter, she went forth the tent and called to the servants, who brought her Kemerezzeman's horse; and she mounted and bade load the beasts and set forward. So they bound on the burdens and departed, none doubting but she was Kemerezzeman, for she resembled



him in face and form ; nor did they leave journeying, days and nights, till they came in sight of a city overlooking the sea, when they halted to rest and pitched their tents without the walls. The princess asked the name of the place and was told, 'It is called the City of Ebony: its king is named Armanous, and he hath a daughter called Heyat en Nufous.' Presently, the King sent to learn who it was that had encamped without his city; so the messenger, coming to the tents, enquired of Budour's servants and was told that she was a king's son, bound for the Khalidan Islands, who had strayed from his road; whereupon he returned and told the King, who straightway took horse and rode out, with his nobles, to meet the strange prince. As he drew near the tents, the princess came to meet him on foot, whereupon the King alighted and they saluted each other. Then he carried her into the city and bringing her to the palace, let spread a banquet and bade transport her company and baggage to the guest-house, where they abode three days; at the end of which time the King came in to Budour (Now she had that day gone to the bath and her face shone as the moon at its full, enchanting all beholders, and she was clad in robes of silk, embroidered with gold and jewels) and said to her, 'Know, O my son, that I am a very old man and am grown unable for the conduct of the state. Now God has blessed me with no child save one daughter, who resembles thee in beauty and grace; so, O my son, if this my country please thee and thou be willing to make thine abode here, I will marry thee to my daughter and give thee my kingdom and so be at rest.' When Budour heard this, she bowed her head and her forehead sweated for shame, and she said to herself, 'How shall I do, and I a woman? If I refuse and depart, I cannot be safe but that he may send after me troops to kill me; and if I consent, belike I shall be put to shame. I have lost my be-

Night  
cix.



loved Kemerezzeman and know not what is come of him, wherefore I see nothing for it but to hold my peace and consent and abide here, till God accomplish what is to be.' So she raised her head and made submission to King Armanous, saying, 'I hear and obey,' whereat he rejoiced and bade make proclamation, throughout the Ebony Islands, to hold high festival and decorate the houses. Then he assembled his chamberlains and Amirs and Viziers and other officers of state and the Cadis of the city, and putting off the kingship, invested Budour therewith and clad her in the royal robes. Moreover, the Amirs and grandees went in to her and did her homage, nothing doubting but that she was a young man, and all who looked on her berayed their hose for the excess of her beauty and grace; then, after the lady Budour had been made Sultan and the drums had been beaten, in announcement of the joyful event, Armanous proceeded to equip his daughter for marriage, and in a few days, they brought Budour in to her, when they seemed as it were two moons risen at one time or two suns foregathering. So they entered the bridal-chamber and the doors were shut and the curtains let down upon them, after the attendants had lighted the candles and spread the bed for them. When Budour found herself alone with the princess Heyat en Nufous, she called to mind her beloved Kemerezzeman and grief was sore upon her. So she wept for his loss and absence and repeated the following verses:

O ye who went and left my heart to pine alone fore'er, No spark of life remains in me, since ye away did fare!

I have an eye that doth complain of sleeplessness alway; Tears have consumed it; would to God that sleeplessness would spare!

When ye departed, after you the lover did abide; But question of him what of pain in absence he doth bear.

But for the ceaseless flood of tears my eyes pour forth, the world Would at my burning all catch fire, yea, seas and lands and air.

**To God Most High I make my moan of dear ones loved and lost, That  
on my passion have no ruth nor pity my despair.**

**I never did them wrong, except my love for them were such ; But into  
blest and curst in love men aye divided were.**

When she had finished, she sat down beside the princess Heyat en Nufous and kissed her on the mouth. Then, rising abruptly, she made the ablution and betook herself to her devotions, nor did she leave praying till Heyat en Nufous was asleep, when she slipt into bed and lay with her back to her till morning ; then rose and went out. Presently, the old king and queen came in to their daughter and asked her how she did, whereupon she told them what had passed and repeated to them the verses she had heard.

Meanwhile, Budour seated herself upon the throne and all the Amirs and captains and officers of state came in to her and wished her joy of the kingship, kissing the earth before her and calling down blessings upon her. She smiled on them and clad them in robes of honour, augmenting the fiefs of the Amirs and giving largesse to the troops ; wherefore all the people loved her and offered up prayers for the continuance of her reign, doubting not but that she was a man. She sat all day in the hall of audience, ordering and forbidding and dispensing justice, releasing those who were in prison and remitting the customs dues, till nightfall, when she withdrew to the apartment prepared for her. Here she found Heyat en Nufous seated ; so she sat down by her and clapping her on the back, caressed her and kissed her between the eyes, repeating the following verses :

**The secret that I cherished my tears have public made ; The wasting of  
my body my passion hath bewrayed.**

**I hid my love and longing ; but on the parting-day My plight, alas !  
revealed it to spies ; 'twas open laid.**

**O ye who have departed the camp, ye've left behind My body worn  
with languor and spirit all decayed.**

Within my heart's recesses ye have your dwelling-place ; My tears are  
ever running and lids with blood berayed.

For ever will I ransom the absent with my soul ; Indeed, for them my  
yearnings are patent and displayed.

I have an eye, whose pupil, for love of them, rejects Sleep and whose  
tears flow ever, unceasing and unstayed.

My foes would have me patient for him ; but God forbid That ever of  
my hearing should heed to them be paid !

I balked their expectation. Of Kemerezzeman Sometime I did accom-  
plish the joys for which I prayed.

He doth, as none before him, perfections all unite ; No king of bygone  
ages was in the like arrayed.

His clemency and bounty Ben Zaldeh's<sup>1</sup> largesse And Muawiyeh's<sup>2</sup>  
mildness have cast into the shade.

But that it would be tedious and verse sufficeth not To picture forth his  
beauties, I'd leave no rhyme unmade.

Then she wiped away her tears and making the ablution,  
stood up to pray ; nor did she give over praying, till drowsi-  
ness overcame Heyat en Nufous and she slept, whereupon  
Budour came and lay beside her till the morning. At day-  
break, she arose and prayed the morning-prayer ; then,  
going forth, seated herself on the throne and passed the  
day in ordering and forbidding and administering justice.  
Meanwhile, King Armanous went in to his daughter and  
asked her how she did ; so she told him all that had passed  
and repeated to him the verses that Budour had recited,  
adding, ' O my father, never saw I one more abounding in  
sense and modesty than my husband, save that he doth  
nothing but weep and sigh.' ' O my daughter,' answered  
her father, ' have patience with him yet this third night,  
and if he go not in to thee and do away thy maidenhead,

**Night** we will take order with him and oust him from the throne  
**ix.** and banish him the country.' When the night came, the

<sup>1</sup> See post p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> The mansuetude of the Khalif Muawiyeh, the founder of the Ommiade  
dynasty, is a proverb among the Arabs, though hardly to be reconciled  
with the accredited records of his life and actions

princess Budour rose from the throne and betaking herself to the bride-chamber, found the candles lighted and the princess Heyat en Nufous sitting awaiting her; whereupon she bethought her of her husband and recalling the early severance of their loves, wept and sighed and groaned groan upon groan, repeating the following verses:

**I** swear the tidings of my woes fills all the country-side, Like the sun shining on the hills of Nejed far and wide.

**His** gesture speaks, but hard to tell the meaning of it is, And thus my yearning without end is ever magnified.

**I** hate fair patience since the hour I fell in love with thee. Hast seen a lover hating love at any time or tide?

**One**, in whose glances sickness lies, hath smitten me to death, For looks are deadliest of the things, wherein doth sickness bide.

**He** shook his clustered ringlets down and laid his chin-band by, And beauty thus in him, at once both black and white, I spied.

**Sickness** and cure are in his hands; for, to the sick of love, By him alone who caused their dole can healing be applied.

**The** softness of his waist hath made his girdle mad for love And of his hips, for jealousy, to rise he is denied.

**His** forehead, covered with his curls, is as a mirky night; Unveiled, 'tis as a shining moon that thrusts the dark aside.

When she had finished, she would have risen to pray, but Heyat en Nufous caught her by the skirt, saying, 'O my lord, art thou not ashamed to neglect me thus, after all the favour my father hath done thee?' When Budour heard this, she sat down again and said, 'O my beloved, what is this thou sayest?' 'What I say,' answered Heyat en Nufous, 'is that I never saw any so self-satisfied as thou. Is every fair one so disdainful? I say not this to incline thee to me, but only of my fear for thee from King Armanous; for he purposes, an thou go not in to me to-night and do away my maidenhead, to strip thee of the kingship on the morrow and banish thee the realm; and belike his much anger may lead him to kill thee. But I,



O my lord, have compassion on thee and give thee fair warning ; and it is thine to decide.' At this, Budour bowed her head in perplexity and said in herself, 'If I refuse, I am lost, and if I obey, I am shamed. I am now queen of all the Ebony Islands and they are under my rule and I shall never again foregather with Kemerezzeman except it be in this place ; for there is no way for him to his native land but through the Ebony Islands. Verily, I know not what to do, for I am no man that I should arise and open this virgin girl ; but I commit my case to God, who orders all for the best.' Then she said to Heyat en Nufous, 'O my beloved, it is in my own despite that I have neglected thee and abstained from thee.' And she discovered herself to her and told her her whole story, saying, 'I conjure thee by Allah to keep my counsel, till God reunite me with my beloved Kemerezzeman, and then let what will happen.' Her story moved Heyat en Nufous to wonder and pity, and she prayed God to reunite her with her beloved, saying, 'Fear nothing, O my sister, but have patience till God accomplish that which is to be.' And she repeated the following verses :

Night  
cxi.

None keepeth counsel saving those who're trusty and discreet. A secret's  
ever safely placed with honest folk and leal ;  
And secrets trusted unto me are in a locked-up house, Whose keys are  
lost and on whose door is set the Cadi's seal.

'O my sister,' continued she, 'the breasts of the noble are the graves of secrets, and I will not discover thine.' Then they toyed and embraced and kissed and slept till near the call to morning-prayer, when Heyat en Nufous arose and slaughtering a young pigeon, besmeared herself and besprinkled her shift with its blood. Then she put off her trousers and cried out, whereupon her waiting-women hastened to her and raised cries of joy. Presently, her mother came in to her and asked her how she did and tended her and abode with her till evening ; whilst the

lady Budour repaired to the bath and after washing herself, proceeded to the hall of audience, where she sat down on her throne and dispensed justice among the folk. When King Armanous heard the cries, he asked what was the matter and was informed of the consummation of his daughter's marriage; whereat he rejoiced and his breast dilated and he made a great banquet.

To return to King Shehriman. When Kemerezzeman and Merzewan returned not at the appointed time, he passed the night without sleep, restless and consumed with anxiety. The night was long upon him and he thought the day would never dawn. He passed the forenoon of the ensuing day in expectation of his son's coming, but he came not; whereat his heart forebode separation and he was distraught with fears for Kemerezzeman. He wept till his clothes were drenched, crying out, 'Alas, my son!' and repeating the following verses from an aching heart:

Unto the votaries of love I still was contrary, Till of its bitter and its  
sweet myself perforce must taste.

I quaffed its cup of rigours out, yea, even to the dregs, And to its freemen and its slaves myself therein abased.

Fortune aforetime made a vow to separate our loves; Now hath she  
kept her vow, alack! and made my life a waste.

Then he wiped away his tears and bade his troops make ready for a long journey. So they all mounted and set forth, headed by the Sultan, whose heart burnt with grief and anxiety for his son. He divided the troops into six bodies, whom he despatched in as many directions, giving them rendezvous for the morrow at the cross-roads. Accordingly they scoured the country diligently all that day and night, till at noon of the ensuing day they joined company at the cross-roads. Here four roads met and they knew not which the prince had followed, till they came to the torn clothes and found shreds of flesh and

blood scattered by the way on all sides. When the King saw this, he cried out from his inmost heart, saying, 'Alas, my son!' and buffeted his face and tore his beard and rent his clothes, doubting not but his son was dead. Then he gave himself up to weeping and wailing, and the troops also wept for his weeping, being assured that the prince had perished. They wept and lamented and threw dust on their heads till they were nigh upon death, and the night surprised them whilst they were thus engaged. Then the King repeated the following verses, with a heart on fire for the torment of his despair:

Blame not the mourner for the grief to which he is a prey, For yearning  
 sure sufficeth him, with all its drear dismay.  
 He weeps for dreariment and grief and stress of longing pain, And eke  
 his transport doth the fires, that rage in him, bewray.  
 Alas, his fortune who's Love's slave, whom languishment hath bound  
 Never to let his eyelids stint from weeping night and day!  
 He mourns the loss of one was like a bright and brilliant moon, That  
 shone out over all his peers in glorious array.  
 But Death did proffer to his lips a brimming cup to drink, What time he  
 left his native land, and now he's far away.  
 He left his home and went from us unto calamity; Nor to his brethren  
 was it given to him farewell to say.  
 Indeed, his loss hath stricken me with anguish and with woe; Yea, for  
 estrangement from his sight my wits are gone astray.  
 Whenas the Lord of all vouchsafed to him His Paradise, Upon his  
 journey forth he fared and passed from us for aye.

**Night** Then he returned with the troops to his capital, giving  
 cxxii. up his son for lost and deeming that wild beasts or high-  
 waymen had set on him and torn him in pieces, and made  
 proclamation that all in the Khalidan Islands should don  
 black in mourning for him. Moreover, he built a pavilion  
 in his memory, naming it House of Lamentations, and  
 here he was wont to spend his days, (with the exception  
 of Mondays and Thursdays, which he devoted to the busi-

ness of the state), mourning for his son and bewailing him with verses, of which the following are some :

My day of bliss is that whereon thou drawest near to me, And that,  
whereon thou turn'st away, my day of death and fear.  
What though I tremble all the night and go in dread of death, Yet thine  
embraces are to me than safety far more dear.

And again :

My soul redeem the absent, whose going cast a blight On hearts and  
did afflict them with anguish and affright !  
Let gladness then accomplish its purification-time,<sup>1</sup> For, by a triple  
divorcement,<sup>2</sup> I've put away delight.

Meanwhile, the princess Budour abode in the Ebony Islands, whilst the folk would point to her and say, 'Yonder is King Armanous's son-in-law;' and every night she lay with Heyat en Nufous, to whom she made moan of her longing for her husband Kemerezzeman, weeping and describing to her his beauty and grace and yearning to enjoy him, though but in a dream. And bytimes she would repeat these verses :

God knows that, since my severance from thee, full sore I've wept, So  
sore that needs my eyes must run for very tears in debt.  
"Have patience," quoth my censurer, "and thou shalt win them yet,"  
And I, "O thou that blamest me, whence should I patience get?"

All this time, Kemerezzeman abode with the gardener, weeping and repeating verses night and day, bewailing the seasons of enjoyment and the nights of delight, whilst the gardener comforted him with the assurance that the ship would set sail for the land of the Muslims at the end of the year. One day, he saw the folk crowding together and wondered at this ; but the gardener came in to him

<sup>1</sup> Alluding, for the sake of metaphor, to the months of purification which, according to the Muslim ceremonial law, must be accomplished by a divorced woman, before she can marry again.

<sup>2</sup> A divorce three times pronounced cannot be revoked.



and said, 'O my son, give over work for to-day neither water the trees; for it is a festival day, on which the folk visit one another. So rest and only keep thine eye on the garden, whilst I go look after the ship for thee; for yet but a little while and I send thee to the land of the Muslims.' So saying, he went out, leaving Kemerezzeman alone in the garden, who fell to musing upon his condition, till his courage gave way and the tears streamed from his eyes. He wept till he swooned away, and when he recovered, he rose and walked about the garden pondering what fate had done with him and bewailing his long estrangement from those he loved. As he went thus, absorbed in melancholy thought, his foot stumbled and he fell on his face, striking his forehead against the stump of a tree. The blow cut it open and his blood ran down and blent with his tears. He rose and wiping away the blood, dried his tears and bound his forehead with a piece of rag; then continued his melancholy walk about the garden. Presently, he saw two birds quarrelling on a tree, and one of them smote the other on the neck with its beak and cut off its head, with which it flew away, whilst the slain bird's body fell to the ground before Kemerezzeman. As it lay, two great birds flew down and alighting, one at the head and the other at the tail of the dead bird, drooped their wings over it and bowing their heads towards it, wept; and when Kemerezzeman saw them thus bewail their mate, he called to mind his wife and father and wept also. Then he saw them dig a grave and bury the dead bird; after which they flew away, but presently returned with the murderer and alighting on the grave, stamped on him till they killed him. Then they rent his belly and tearing out his entrails, poured the blood on the grave. Moreover, they stripped off his skin and tearing his flesh in pieces, scattered it hither and thither. All this while Kemerezzeman was watching them

Night  
ccxlii.

and wondering; but presently, chancing to look at the dead bird's crop, he saw therein something gleaming. So he opened it and found the talisman that had been the cause of his separation from his wife. At this sight, he fell down in a swoon for joy; and when he revived, he said, 'Praised be God! This is a good omen and a pre-sage of reunion with my beloved.' Then he examined the jewel and passed it over his eyes; after which he bound it to his arm, rejoicing in coming good, and walked about, awaiting the gardener's return, till nightfall; when, as he came not, he lay down and slept in his wonted place. At daybreak he rose and girding himself with a cord of palm-fibre, took hoe and basket and went out to his work in the garden. Presently, he came to a carob-tree and struck the hoe into its roots. The blow resounded [as if it had fallen on metal]; so he cleared away the earth and discovered a trap-door of brass. He raised the trap and found a winding stair, which he descended and came to an ancient vault of the time of Aad and Themoud,<sup>1</sup> hewn out of the rock. Round the vault stood many brazen vessels of the bigness of a great oil-jar, into one of which he put his hand and found it full of red and shining gold; whereupon he said to himself, 'Verily, the days of weariness are past and joy and solace are come!' Then he returned to the garden and replacing the trap-door, busied himself in tending the trees till nightfall, when the gardener came back and said to him, 'O my son, rejoice in a speedy return to thy native land, for the merchants are ready for the voyage and in three days' time the ship will set sail for the City of Ebony, which is the first of the cities of the Muslims; and thence thou must travel by land six months' journey till thou come to the Islands of Khalidan, the dominions of King Shehriman.' At this Kemerezzeman rejoiced and repeated the following verses:

Night  
ccxib.

<sup>1</sup> Fabulous peoples mentioned in the Koran.

Forsake not a lover unused to aversion from thee, Nor punish the guiltless with rigour and cruelty.

Another, when absence was long, had forgotten thee And changed from his faith and his case; not so with me.

Then he kissed the gardener's hand, saying, 'O my father, even as thou hast brought me glad tidings, so I also have great good news for thee,' and told him of his discovery in the garden; whereat the gardener rejoiced and said, 'O my son, fourscore years have I dwelt in this garden and have never chanced on aught; whilst thou, who hast not sojourned with me a year, hast discovered this thing; wherefore it is God's gift to thee, for the cesser of thine ill fortune, and will aid thee to rejoin thy folk and foregather with her thou lovest.' 'Not so,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'it must be shared between us.' Then he carried him to the underground chamber and showed him the gold, which was in twenty jars. So he took ten and the gardener ten, and the latter said to him, 'O my son, fill thyself jars with the olives that grow in the garden, for they are not found but in our land and are sought after; the merchants carry them to all parts and they are called Asafiri<sup>1</sup> olives. Lay the gold in the jars and cover it with olives: then stop them and cover them and take them with thee in the ship.' So Kemerezzeman took fifty jars and laying in each somewhat of the gold, filled it up with olives. At the bottom of one of the jars he laid the talisman, then stopped and covered the jars and sat down to talk with the gardener, making sure of speedy reunion with his own people and saying in himself, 'When I come to the Ebony Islands, I will journey thence to my father's country and enquire for my beloved Budour. I wonder whether she turned back to her own land or journeyed

<sup>1</sup> Said to be so called, because they attract sparrows (*asafir*), but it seems to me more probable that the name denotes the colour of the fruit and is derived from *usfur*, safflower.

on to my father's country or whether there befell her any accident by the way.' And he repeated the following verses :

**Love in my breast they lit and passed away forthright : Far distant is the land that holds my soul's delight.**

**Far, far from me the camp and those that dwell therein ; No visitation-place again shall us unite.**

**Patience and reason fled from me, when they fared forth ; Sleep failed me and despair o'ercame me, like a blight.**

**They left me, and with them departed all my joy ; Tranquillity and peace with them have taken flight.**

**They made mine eyes run down with tears of love laid waste ; My lids for lack of them brim over day and night.**

**Whenas my sad soul longs to see them once again And waiting and desire are heavy on my spright,**

**Midmost my heart of hearts their images I trace, Love and desireful pain and yearning for their sight.**

Then he told the gardener what he had seen pass between the birds, whereat he wondered ; and they both lay down and slept till the morning. The gardener awoke sick and abode thus two days ; but on the third day, his sickness increased on him, till they despaired of his life and Kemerezzeman grieved sore for him. Meanwhile, the captain and sailors came and enquired for the gardener. Kemerezzeman told them that he was sick, and they said, 'Where is the young man that is minded to go with us to the Ebony Islands?' 'He is your servant,' answered the prince and bade them carry the jars of olives to the ship. So they transported them to the ship, saying, 'Make haste, for the wind is fair ;' and he answered, 'I hear and obey.' Then he carried his victual on board and returning, to bid the gardener farewell, found him in the agonies of death. So he sat down at his head and closed his eyes, and his soul departed his body ; whereupon he laid him out and committed him to the earth to the mercy of God the Most High. Then he went down to the port, to embark, but



found that the ship had already weighed anchor and set sail; nor did she cease to cleave the waters, till she disappeared from his sight. So he returned to the garden, **Night** sorrowful and heavy-hearted, and sitting down, threw dust **stab.** on his head and buffeted his face. Then he rented the garden of its owner and hired a man to help him tend the trees. Moreover, he went down to the underground chamber and bringing up the rest of the gold, stowed it in other fifty jars, which he filled up with olives. Then he enquired of the ship and was told that it sailed but once a year; at which his affliction redoubled and he mourned sore for that which had befallen him, above all for the loss of the princess Budour's talisman, and spent his nights and days weeping and repeating verses.

Meanwhile, the ship sailed with a favouring wind, till it reached the Ebony Islands. As fate would have it, the princess Budour was sitting at a window overlooking the sea and saw the ship cast anchor in the port. At this sight, her heart throbbed and she mounted and riding down to the port, with her officers, halted by the ship, whilst the sailors broke out the cargo and transported the goods to the storehouses; after which she called the captain and asked what he had with him. 'O King,' answered he, 'I have with me drugs and cosmetics and powders and ointments and plasters and rich stuffs and Yemen rugs and other costly merchandise, not to be borne of mule or camel, and all manner essences and spices and perfumes, civet and ambergris and camphor and Sumatra aloes-wood, and tamarinds and Asafiri olives to boot, such as are rare to find in this country.' When she heard talk of Asafiri olives, her heart yearned for them and she said to the captain, 'How much olives hast thou?' 'Fifty jars full,' answered he. 'Their owner is not with us, but the King shall take what he will of them.' Quoth she, 'Bring them ashore, that I may see them.' So he called to the sailors, who brought

her the fifty jars ; and she opened one and looking at the olives, said to the captain, 'I will take the whole fifty and pay you their value, whatever it may be.' 'By Allah, O my lord,' answered he, 'they have no value in our country and the fifty jars may be worth some hundred dirhems ; but their owner tarried behind us, and he is a poor man.' 'And what are they worth here?' asked she. 'A thousand dirhems,' replied he. 'I will take them at that price,' quoth she and bade carry the fifty jars to the palace. When it was night, she called for a jar of olives and opened it, there being none present but herself and the princess Heyat en Nufous. Then, taking a dish, she turned into it the contents of the jar, when behold there fell out into the dish with the olives a heap of red gold and she said to Heyat en Nufous, 'This is nought but gold !' So she sent for the rest of the jars and found each one full of gold and scarce enough olives in the whole fifty to fill one jar. Moreover, she sought among the gold and found the talisman, which she took and examined and knew for that which Kemerezzeman had taken from off the riband of her trousers ; whereupon she cried out for joy and fell down in a swoon. When she revived, she said in herself, 'Verily, this talisman was the cause of my separation from my beloved Kemerezzeman ; but now it is an omen of good.' Then she showed it to Heyat en Nufous and said to her, 'This was the cause of separation and now, please God, it shall be the cause of reunion.' As soon as it was day, she seated herself on her throne and sent for the captain, who came and kissed the ground before her. Quoth she, 'Where didst thou leave the owner of these olives?' 'O King of the age,' answered he, 'we left him in the land of the Magians and he is a gardener there.' 'Except thou bring him to me,' said she, 'thou knowest not the harm that awaits thee and thy ship.' Then she bade seal up the merchants' storehouses and said to them, 'The owner

Night  
ccxi.

of these olives is my debtor; and an ye bring him not to me, I will without fail put you all to death and confiscate your goods.' So they all went to the captain and promised him the hire of the ship, if he would go and return a second time, saying, 'Deliver us from this masterful tyrant.' Accordingly, the captain set sail and God decreed him a prosperous voyage, till he came to the city of the Magians, and landing by night, went up to the garden. Now the night was long upon Kemerezzeman, and he sat, bethinking him of his beloved and weeping over what had befallen him and repeating the following verses:

Full many a night I've passed, whose stars their course did stay, A night  
that seemed of those that will not pass away,  
That was, as 'twere, for length the Resurrection-morn, To him that  
watched therein and waited for the day!

At this moment, the captain knocked at the garden-gate, and Kemerezzeman opened and went out to him, whereupon the sailors seized him and carrying him on board the ship, weighed anchor forthright. They sailed on without ceasing days and nights, whilst Kemerezzeman knew not why they dealt thus with him; but when he questioned them, they replied, 'Thou hast offended against the lord of the Ebony Islands, the son-in-law of King Armanous, and hast stolen his good, unhappy wretch that thou art!' 'By Allah,' said he, 'I know not the country nor was I ever there in all my life!' However, they fared on with him, till they made the Ebony Islands and landing, carried him up to the princess Budour, who knew him at sight and said, 'Leave him with the eunuchs, that they may take him to the bath.' Then she relieved the merchants of the embargo and gave the captain a dress of honour and ten thousand dinars; after which, she went in that night to the princess Heyat en Nufous and told her what had passed, saying, 'Keep thou my counsel, till I accomplish my purpose and do a thing that shall be recorded and told to



kings and commoners after us.' Meanwhile, they carried Kemerezzeman to the bath and clad him in a royal habit, so that, when he came forth, he resembled a willow-wand or a star whose aspect put to shame both sun and moon, and his life returned to him. Then he went in to the princess Budour, who, when she saw him, schooled her heart to patience, till she should have accomplished her purpose, and bestowed on him slaves and servants, black and white, and camels and mules. Moreover, she gave him a treasury of money and advanced him from dignity to dignity, till she made him treasurer and committed to his charge all the treasures of the state; nor did she leave day by day to increase his allowances and afford him fresh marks of her favour. As for Kemerezzeman, he was at a loss for the reason of all the honour and favour she showed him and gave gifts and largesse out of the abundance of the wealth he owed to her munificence, devoting himself in particular to the service of King Armanous, so that he and all the Amirs and people, great and small, loved him and were wont to swear by his life. Nevertheless, he ceased not to marvel at the favour shown him by Budour and said in himself, 'By Allah, there must be a reason for this affection! Peradventure, this king favours me thus excessively with some ill purpose and needs must I therefore crave leave of him to depart his realm.' So he went in to Budour and said to her, 'O King, thou hast overwhelmed me with favours, but it will fulfil the measure of thy bounties if thou wilt take from me all thou hast given and let me depart.' She smiled and said, 'What makes thee seek to depart and plunge into new perils, whenas thou art in the enjoyment of the greatest favour and prosperity?' 'O King,' answered Kemerezzeman, 'this favour, if there be no reason for it, is indeed a wonder of wonders, more by token that thou hast advanced me to dignities such as befit graybeards, albeit I am but a child.' 'The



reason is,' answered she, 'that I love thee for thine exceeding grace and thy surpassing beauty; and so thou wilt but grant me my desire of thee, I will advance thee yet further in honour and favour and largesse and make thee Vizier, for all thy tender age, even as the folk made me Sultan and I no older than thou; so that nowadays there is nothing strange in the headship of children, and gifted of God was he who said:

Our time is, meseems, of the lineage of Lot; It craves the advancement of younglings, God wot.'

When Kemerezzeman heard this, he was confounded and his cheeks flushed till they seemed on fire; and he said, 'I reckon not of favours that involve the commission of sin; I will live poor in wealth but rich in virtue and honour.' Quoth she, 'I am not the dupe of thy scruples, arising from prudery and coquetry: and God bless him who says:

I mentioned to him the pact of fruition, and he, "How long with vexatious discourse wilt thou set upon me?"

I showed him a dinar and straightway he sang out and said, "O whither shall one from Fate irresistible flee!"

'O King,' replied Kemerezzeman, 'I have not the wont of these doings, nor have I strength, who am but of tender years, to bear these heavy burdens, for which elder than I have proved unable.' She smiled and rejoined, 'Indeed, it is wonderful how error springs from the disorder of the wit. Since thou art but a boy, why standest thou in fear of sin or the doing of forbidden things, seeing that thou art not yet come to years of discretion and the offences of a child incur neither punishment nor reproof? Verily, thou committest thyself to an argument advanced but for the sake of contention, and it behoves thee to bow to the ordinance of fruition, which has been given against thee. Wherefore, henceforward, give over denial and coyness, for

the commandment of God is a foreordained decree:<sup>1</sup> indeed, I have more reason than thou to fear falling into error; and well-inspired was he who said:

My pintle is big and the little one said unto me, "Tilt boldly therewith at my inwards and quit thee thy need."

Quoth I, "'Tis unlawful;" but he, "It is lawful with me;" So to it I fell, supporting myself by his rede.'

When Kemerezzeman heard these words, the light in his eyes became darkness and he said, 'O King, thou hast in thy palace women and female slaves, that have not their like in this age: may not these suffice thee without me? Do thy will with them and leave me.' 'Thou speakest truth,' answered she; 'but it is not with them that one who loves thee can heal himself of torment and fever; for when tastes and inclinations are corrupted, they hearken to other than good counsel. So leave arguing and hear what the poet says:

Seest not the fruits of the market, how of two kinds they be? Some are for figs,<sup>2</sup> but more for the fruit of the sycamore-tree.<sup>3</sup>

And what another says:

Full many an one, whose ankle-rings are dumb, her girdle sounds; So this one is content and that a tale of need must tell.

Thou'dst have me, foolwise, in her charms forget thee. God forfend I, that a true believer am, should turn an infidel!

No, by a whisker that makes mock of all her curls, I swear, Nor maid nor strumpet from thy side shall me by guile compel!

And a third:

O pearl of loveliness, to love thee is my faith; Yea, and my choice of all the faiths that have been aye.

Women I have forsworn, indeed, for thy sweet sake, So that the folk avouch I'm grown a monk to-day

And a fourth:

Compare not a wench with a boy and to the spy, Who says to thee, "This is wrong," pay thou no heed.

<sup>1</sup> *Koran*, xxxiii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Met.* anus.

<sup>3</sup> *Met.* cunnus.

Twixt a woman whose feet one's lips kiss and a smooth-faced fawn,  
Who kisses the earth, the difference is great indeed.

And a fifth :

My soul be thy ransom ! Indeed, I've chosen thee out with intent,  
Because thou layest no eggs and dost not menstruate.  
For, an I inclined to foregather with harlots, upon my faith, The wide,  
wide world for the brats I should get would prove too strait.

And a sixth :

Quoth she to me,—and sore enraged for wounded pride was she, For  
she in sooth had bidden me to that which might not be,—  
“An if thou swive me not forthright, as one should swive his wife, If  
thou be made a cuckold straight, reproach it not to me.  
Meseems thy yard is made of wax, for very flaccidness ; For, when I  
rub it with my hand, it softens instantly.”

And a seventh :

Quoth she (for I to lie with her would not consent), “O fool, that  
followest on thy folly to the extent,  
If thou reject my kaze for *Kibleh*<sup>1</sup> to thy yard, We'll show thee one  
wherewith thou shalt be sure content.”

And an eighth :

She proffered me a tender kaze ; But I, “I will not swive,” replied.  
She drew back, saying, “From the truth Needs must he turn who's  
turned aside ;”<sup>2</sup>  
And swiving frontwise in our day Is all abandoned and decried ;”  
Then turned and showed me, as it were A lump of silver, her back-  
side.  
“Well done, O mistress mine ! No more Am I in pain for thee,” I  
cried,  
“Whose poke of all God's openings<sup>3</sup> Is sure the amplest and most  
wide !”

<sup>1</sup> *Kibleh*, the point of the compass to which one turns in prayer.  
Mecca is the Kibleh of the Muslims, even as Jerusalem that of the Jews  
and Christians. The meaning of the text is obvious.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. of God.—*Koran*, li. 9.

<sup>3</sup> The word (*futouk*) translated “openings” may also be rendered  
“victories” or “benefits.”

And a ninth :

Men crave forgiveness with uplifted hands ; But women pray with lifted legs, I trow.<sup>1</sup>

Out on it for a pious piece of work ! God shall exalt it to the deeps below.<sup>2</sup>

When Kemerezzeman heard these verses and was certified that there was no escaping compliance with her will, he said, 'O King, if thou must needs have it so, swear to me that thou wilt use me thus but once, though it avail not to stay thy debauched appetite ; and that thou wilt never again require me of this to the end of time ; so it may be God will purge me of the sin.' 'I promise thee that,' replied she, 'hoping that God of His favour will relent towards us and blot out our mortal sins ; for the compass of the Divine forgiveness is not indeed so strait, but it may altogether embrace us and absolve us of the excess of our transgressions and bring us to the light of righteousness out of the darkness of error. As most excellent well saith the poet :

The folk imagine of us twain an evil thing, I ween, And with their hearts and souls, indeed, they do persist therein.

Come, let us justify their thought and free them thus from guilt, This once, 'gainst us ; and then will we repent us of our sin.'

Then she swore to him a solemn oath, by Him whose existence is unconditioned, that this thing should befall betwixt them but once and never again for all time, and vowed to him that the desire of him was driving her to death and perdition. So he went with her, on this condition, to her privy closet, that she might quench the fire of her passion, saying, 'There is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme ! This is the ordinance of the All-powerful, the All-wise !' And did off

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusæ* passim.

<sup>2</sup> An audacious parody of the Koran, applied ironically, "And the pious work God shall raise up."—*Koran*, xxxv. 11.



his trousers, in the utmost confusion, with the tears running from his eyes for stress of affright; whereat she smiled and carrying him on to a couch, said to him, 'After this night, thou shalt see nought that will displease thee.' Then she turned to him, kissing and clipping him and twining leg with leg, and said to him, 'Put thy hand, between my thighs, to that thou wottest of, so haply it may be won to stand up after prostration.' He wept and said, 'I am not good at aught of this.' But she said, 'As I live, an thou do as I bid thee, it shall profit thee!' So he put out his hand, with a heart on fire for confusion, and found her thighs fresher than cream and softer than silk. The touching of them pleased him and he moved his hand hither and thither, till he came to a dome abounding in benedictions and movements and said in himself, 'Belike this king is a hermaphrodite, nor male nor female.' So he said to her, 'O King, I cannot find that thou hast any manly gear, even as other men; what then moved thee to do thus?' When the princess heard this, she laughed till she fell backward, and said, 'O my beloved, how quickly thou hast forgotten the nights we have lain together!' Then she made herself known to him and he knew her for his wife, the Lady Budour, daughter of King Ghafour. So he embraced her and she embraced him and they kissed each other; then they lay down on the bed of delight, repeating the words of the poet:

Whenas the softness of a shape did bid him to my arms, That, as it were  
a trailing vine with twinings did him ply  
And on the hardness of his heart its very softness shed, He yielded,  
though at first he feigned reluctance to comply,  
And came, provided with a stock of caution safe and sure, Fearing lest,  
when he did appear, the railers should him spy.  
His waist of buttocks maketh moan, that lay upon his feet A very camel's  
load, what time he would a-walking hie.  
Girt with his glances' trenchant swords and cuirassed with the mail O!  
his bright locks, as 'twere the dusk new fallen from the sky,

His fragrance brought me from afar the news of his approach, And forth,  
 as bird let out from cage, to meet my love fled I.  
 I laid my cheek within his way, beneath his sandal-soles, And lo, their  
 dust's collyrium healed the ailment of mine eye !  
 With an embrace I hoisted up the flag of loves new linked And loosed  
 the knot of my delight, that made as 'twould deny.  
 Then let I call high festival, and gladness, all unmixed With any thought  
 of troublousness, came flocking in reply.  
 The full moon handselled with the stars the teeth, like grains of pearl,  
 That on the laughing face of wine now dance, now stirless lie.  
 So in the niche of their delight I gave me up to joys, The veriest sinner  
 would repent, if he their like might try.  
 The morning-glories of his face be pledge I'll ne'er, in him, Forget the  
 writ that biddeth us One only glorify !<sup>1</sup>

Then they told one another all that had befallen them since their separation, after which he began to upbraid her, saying, 'What moved thee to deal with me as thou hast done this night?' 'Do not reproach me,' replied she; 'for I did this but by way of jest and for increase of pleasure and gladness.' When it was morning and the day arose with its light and shone, she sent to King Armanous and acquainted him with the truth of the case and that she was wife to Kemerezzeman. Moreover, she told him their story and the manner of their separation and how his daughter Heyat en Nufous was yet a maid. He marvelled greatly at their story and bade record it in letters of gold. Then he turned to Kemerezzeman and said, 'O king's son, art thou minded to marry my daughter and become my son-in-law?' 'I must consult the princess Budour,' answered he; 'for I owe her favour without stint.' So he took counsel with her and she said, 'This is well seen; marry her and I will be her handmaid, for I am her debtor for kindness and favour and good offices, more by token that we are here in her place and that the king her

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* The chapter of clearing (oneself from belief in any but God), or Unity, *Koran*, cxii. It ends with the words, "There is none like unto Him."

Night  
xxviii.

father has loaded us with benefits.' When he saw that she inclined to this and was not jealous of Heyat en Nufous, he agreed with her thereupon and told King Armanous what she had said, whereat he rejoiced greatly. Then he went out and seating himself in his chair of estate, assembled all the Viziers and Amirs and chamberlains and grandees, to whom he related the whole story and acquainted them with his desire to marry his daughter to Kemerezzeman and make him king in the stead of the princess Budour. Whereupon said they all, 'Since he is the husband of the princess Budour, who hath been our Sultan till now, whilst we deemed her King Armanous's son-in-law, we are all content to have him to Sultan over us and will be his servants, nor will we swerve from his allegiance.' At this Armanous rejoiced and summoning Cadis and witnesses and the chief officers of state, let draw up the contract of marriage between Kemerezzeman and his daughter, the princess Heyat en Nufous. Then he held high festival, giving sumptuous banquets and bestowing costly dresses of honour upon the Amirs and captains; moreover, he gave alms to the poor and needy and freed the prisoners. All the folk rejoiced in the coming of Kemerezzeman to the throne, wishing him abiding glory and prosperity and happiness and renown, and as soon as he became king, he remitted the customs-dues and released all that remained in prison. Thus he abode a long while, ordering himself worthily towards his subjects, and lived with his wives in peace and happiness and content, lying the night with each of them in turn. And indeed all his troubles and afflictions were blotted out from him and he forgot his father King Shehriman and his former estate of honour and worship with him.

After awhile, God the Most High blessed him with two sons, as they were two shining moons, the elder, whose name was prince Amjed, by Queen Budour, and the



younger, whose name was prince Asaad and who was comelier than his brother, by Queen Heyat en Nufous. They were reared in splendour and delight and were instructed in penmanship and science and the arts of government and horsemanship and other polite arts and accomplishments, till they attained the extreme of perfection and the utmost limit of beauty and grace, and both men and women were ravished by their charms. They grew up together, till they reached the age of seventeen, and loved one another so dear that they were never apart, eating and drinking together and sleeping in one bed; and all the people envied them their beauty and concord. When they came to man's estate and were endowed with every perfection, their father was wont, as often as he went on a journey, to make them sit in his stead by turns in the place of judgment, and each did justice among the folk one day at a time. Now, as unalterable fate and foreordained destiny would have it, Queen Budour fell in love with Asaad, son of Queen Heyat en Nufous, and the latter became enamoured of Amjed; and each of them used to sport and play with the other's son, kissing him and straining him to her bosom, whilst each thought that the other's behaviour arose but from motherly affection. On this wise, passion got the mastery of the two women's hearts and they became madly enamoured of the two youths, so that when the other's son came in to either of them, she would press him to her bosom and long for him never to be parted from her; till, at last, when waiting grew tedious to them and they found no way to enjoyment, they refused meat and drink and forewent the solace of sleep. Presently, the King went out to hunt, bidding his sons sit to do justice in his stead, each one day in turn, according to their wont. So Night prince Amjed sat on the throne the first day, order-ccxviii.  
ing and forbidding, appointing and deposing, giving and



denying; and Queen Heyat en Nufous took a scroll and wrote to him the following letter, suing for his favour and discovering to him her passion, in fine, altogether putting off the mask and giving him to know that she desired to enjoy him. 'From the wretched lover, the sorrowful severed one, whose youth is wasted in the love of thee and whose torment for thee is prolonged. Were I to recount to thee the extent of my affliction and what I suffer for sadness, the passion that is in my breast and all that I endure for weeping and groaning and the rending of my sorrowful heart, my unremitting cares and my ceaseless griefs and all my suffering for severance and sadness and the ardour of desire, no letter could contain it nor calculation compass it. Indeed, earth and heaven are straitened upon me, and I have no hope and no trust but in thee. I am come nigh upon death and suffer the horrors of dissolution; burning is sore upon me, and the pangs of separation and estrangement. Were I to set out the yearnings that possess me, no scrolls would suffice thereto: and of the excess of my affliction and wasting away, I have made the following verses:

Were I to set down all I feel of heart-consuming dole And all the transport and unease that harbour in my soul,  
Nor ink nor pen in all the world thereafter would remain, Nor aught from east to west were left of paper or of scroll.'

Then she folded up the silken tresses of her hair, whose cost swallowed up treasures, in the letter, and wrapping it in a piece of rich silk, scented with musk and ambergris, laid it in a handkerchief; after which she gave it to an  
 Night  
 cxxix. eunuch and bade him carry it to prince Amjed. The eunuch took it, knowing not what the future hid for him, (for He who knoweth the hidden things ordereth events according to His will,) and going in to the prince, kissed the earth before him and gave him the letter. He opened it and reading it, was ware that his father's wife was in

intent an adulteress and a traitress to her husband ; whereat he was exceeding wroth and railed at women and their works, saying, ' May God curse women, the traitresses, that lack reason and religion ! ' Then he drew his sword and said to the eunuch, ' Out on thee, thou wicked slave ! Dost thou carry adulterous messages for thy lord's wife ? By Allah, there is no good in thee, O black of hue and heart, O foul of face and nature ! ' So saying, he smote him on the neck and severed his head from his body ; then, folding the letter in the handkerchief, he thrust it into his pocket and went in to his own mother and told her what had passed, reviling and reproaching her and saying, ' Each one of you is worse than the other ; and by God the Great, did I not fear to transgress against the rights of my father and my brother Asaad, I would assuredly go in to her and cut off her head, even as I cut off that of her eunuch ! ' Then he went out in a great rage ; and when the news reached Queen Heyat en Nufous of what he had done with her messenger, she reviled him and cursed him and plotted perfidy against him. He passed the night, sick with anger and disgust and concern, nor was meat nor drink nor sleep sweet to him. Next morning, prince Asaad went out in his turn to rule the folk in his father's stead and sat in the audience-chamber, judging and administering justice, appointing and deposing, ordering and forbidding, giving and bestowing, till near the time of afternoon-prayer, when Queen Budour sent for a crafty old woman and discovering to her what was in her heart, wrote a letter to prince Asaad, complaining of the excess of her love and longing for him, as follows : ' From her who perisheth for passion and love-longing to the goodliest of mankind in form and nature, him who is conceited of his own loveliness and glories in his amorous grace, who turneth away from those that seek to enjoy him and refuseth to show favour unto the lowly and the self-abasing, him who is

cruel and disdainful ; from the despairing lover to prince Asaad, lord of surpassing beauty and excelling grace, of the moon-bright face and the flower-white brow and dazzling splendour. This is my letter to him whose love consumes my body and rends my skin and my bones. Know that my patience fails me and I am at a loss what to do : longing and wakefulness weary me and sleep and patience deny themselves to me ; but mourning and watching stick fast to me and desire and passion torment me, and the extremes of languor and sickness. Yet may my life be thy ransom, though it be thy pleasure to slay her who loveth thee, and may God prolong thy life and preserve thee from every ill ! After this, she wrote the following verses :

Fate hath so ordered it that I must needs thy lover be, O thou whose charms shine as the moon, when at the full is she !  
 All beauty and all eloquence thou dost in thee contain And over all the world of men thou'rt bright and brave to see.  
 That thou my torturer shouldst be, I am indeed content, So but thou wilt one glance bestow, as alms-deed, on me.  
 Happy, thrice happy is her lot who dieth for thy love ! No good is there in any one that doth not cherish thee.

And these also :

To thee, O Asaad, of the pangs of passion I complain ; Have pity on a slave of love, that burns for longing pain.  
 How long, I wonder, shall the hands of passion sport with me And love and dole and sleeplessness consume me, heart and brain ?  
 Whiles do I plain me of a sea within my heart and whiles Of flaming ; surely, this is strange, O thou my wish and bane !  
 Give o'er thy railing, censor mine, and set thyself to flee From love that maketh eyes for aye with burning tears to rain.  
 How oft, for absence and desire, I cry, " Alas, my grief ! " But all my crying and lament in this my case are vain.  
 Thou hast with rigours made me sick, that passed my power to bear : Thou'rt the physician ; do thou me with what befits assain.  
 O thou my censurer, forbear to chide me for my case, Lest, of Love's cruel malady, perdition thee attain.

Then she scented the letter with odoriferous musk and



winding it in the tresses of her hair, which were of Irak silk, with tassels of oblong emeralds, set with pearls and jewels, delivered it to the old woman, bidding her carry it to prince Asaad. She undertook the errand, to pleasure her, and going in straightway to the prince, found him in his closet and delivered him the letter; after which she stood waiting for the answer. When Asaad had read the letter and knew its purport, he wrapped it up again in the tresses and put it in his pocket, cursing false women; then, for he was beyond measure wroth, he sprang up and drawing his sword, smote the old woman on the neck and cut off her head. Then he went in to his mother, Queen Heyat en Nufous, whom he found lying on her bed, sick for that which had betided her with prince Amjed, and railed at her and cursed her; after which he left her and betook himself to his brother, to whom he related what had befallen him with Queen Budour, adding, 'By Allah, O my brother, but that I feared to grieve thee, I had gone in to her forthright and smitten her head off her shoulders!' 'By Allah, O my brother,' replied Amjed, 'the like of what hath befallen thee befell me also yesterday with thy mother Queen Heyat en Nufous.' And he told him what had passed, adding, 'By Allah, O my brother, nought but respect for thee withheld me from going in to her and dealing with her even as I dealt with the eunuch!' They passed the rest of the night in trouble and affliction, conversing and cursing false women, and agreed to keep the matter secret, lest their father should hear of it and kill the two women.

On the morrow, the King returned with his suite from hunting and sat awhile in his chair of estate; after which he dismissed the Amirs and went up to his harem, where he found his two wives lying on the bed, exceeding sick. Now they had made a plot against the two princes and concerted to do away their lives, for that they had exposed



themselves before them and feared to be at their mercy. When Kemerezzeman saw them on this wise, he said to them, 'What ails you?' Whereupon they rose and kissing his hands, answered, perverting the case and saying, 'Know, O King, that thy sons, who have been reared in thy bounty, have played thee false and outraged thee in the persons of thy wives.' When he heard this, the light in his eyes became darkness and his reason fled for the excess of his rage; then said he to them, 'Expound this thing to me.' 'O King of the age,' answered Budour, 'know that these many days past thy son Asaad has been wont to send me letters and messages to solicit me to lewdness, and I still forbade him from this, but he would not be forbidden. When thou wentest forth to hunt, he rushed in on me, drunk and with a drawn sword in his hand, and smiting my eunuch, slew him. Then he mounted on my breast, still holding the sword, and I feared lest he should slay me even as he had slain my eunuch, if I gain-said him; so he took his will of me by force; and now an thou do me not justice on him, O King, I will slay myself with my own hand, for I reck not of life in the world after this foul deed.'

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**ccxx.**

Queen Heyat en Nufous, choking with tears, told him a like story respecting prince Amjed, after which she fell a-weeping and wailing and said, 'Except thou avenge me on him, I will tell my father, King Armanous.' Then they both wept sore before King Kemerezzeman, who, when he saw their tears and heard their words, concluded that their story was true and waxing beyond measure wroth, went out, thinking to fall upon his two sons and put them to death. On his way he met his father-in-law King Armanous, who hearing of his return from the chase, had come to salute him and seeing him with the naked sword in his hand and the blood dripping from his nostrils, for excess of rage, enquired what ailed him. Kemerezzeman told him what

his sons Amjed and Asaad had done and added, 'I am now going in to them, to slay them on the foulest wise and make of them the most shameful of examples.' 'O my son,' said King Armanous, (and indeed he too was wroth with them,) 'thou dost well, and may God not bless them nor any sons that offend thus against their father's honour! But, O my son, the proverb says, "Whoso looks not to the issues, Fortune is no friend to him." In any case, they are thy sons, and it befits not that thou put them to death with thine own hand, lest thou drink of their agony and after repent of having slain them, whenas repentance will avail thee nothing. Rather do thou send one of thine officers with them into the desert and let him kill them there, out of thy sight, for, as says the adage, "When the eye sees not, the heart grieves not."'" Kemerez-zeman saw his father-in-law's words to be just, so he sheathed his sword and turning back, sat down upon his throne and called his treasurer, a very old man, versed in affairs and in the shifts of fortune, to whom he said, 'Go in to my sons Amjed and Asaad; bind fast their hands behind them and lay them in two chests and set them on a mule. Then take horse and carry them into the mid-desert, where do thou put them to death and fill two vials with their blood and bring them to me in haste.' 'I hear and obey,' answered the treasurer and went out forthright to do his bidding. On his way, he met the princes coming out of the palace-vestibule, for they had donned their richest clothes and were on their way to salute their father and give him joy of his safe return from the chase. When he saw them, he laid hands on them, saying, 'O my sons, know that I am but a slave commanded and that your father hath laid a commandment on me: will ye obey his commandment?' 'Yes,' answered they; whereupon he bound their hands and laying them in the chests, set the latter on the back of a mule, with which he left the

city and rode out into the open country, till near midday, when he halted in a waste and desert spot and dismounting, set down the two chests. He opened them and took out Amjed and Asaad ; whom when he saw, he wept sore for their beauty and grace ; then drawing his sword, he said to them, ' O my lords, indeed it irks me to deal so foully by you ; but I am to be excused in this, being but a slave commanded, for that your father King Kemerez-zeman hath bidden me strike off your heads.' ' O Amir,' answered they, ' do the King's bidding, for we submit with patience to that which God (to whom be ascribed might and majesty) hath decreed to us ; and thou art quit of our blood.' Then they embraced and bade each other farewell, and Asaad said to the treasurer, ' God on thee, O uncle, spare me the sight of my brother's agony and make me not drink of his anguish, but kill me first, that it may be the easier for me.' Amjed said the like and entreated the treasurer to kill him before Asaad, saying, ' My brother is younger than I ; so make me not taste of

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ccxi.

his anguish.' And they both wept sore, whilst the treasurer wept for their weeping, and they said to each other, ' All this comes of the malice of those traitresses, our mothers ; and this is the reward of our forbearance towards them. But there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme ! Verily, we are His and unto Him we return.' And Asaad embraced his brother, sobbing and repeating the following verses :

O Thou to whom the sad complain, to whom the fearful flee, Thou that  
art evermore prepared for all that is to be,  
Lord, there is left me no resource but at Thy door to knock ; Yea, at  
whose portal shall I knock, if Thou be deaf to me ?  
O Thou, the treasures of whose grace are in the one word " Be," Be  
favourable, I beseech, for all good is with Thee !

When Amjed heard his brother's weeping, he wept also and pressed him to his bosom, repeating the following verses :

O Thou, whose bounties unto me are more than one, I trow, Whose  
favours lavished on my head are countless as the sand,  
No blow of all the blows of fate has ever fall'n on me, But I have found  
Thee ready still to take me by the hand.

Then said he to the treasurer, 'I conjure thee by the  
One God the Omnipotent King and Protector, kill me  
before my brother Asaad and allay the fire of my heart !'  
But Asaad wept and exclaimed, 'Not so : I will die first ;'  
whereupon said Amjed, 'It were best that we embrace  
each other, so the sword may fall upon us and kill us  
both at one stroke.' So they embraced, face to face, and  
clipped each other straitly, whilst the treasurer bound  
them fast with cords, weeping the while. Then he drew  
his sword and said to them, 'By Allah, O my lords, it is  
indeed hard to me to kill you ! But have ye no last wishes  
or injunctions that I may fulfil or message that I may  
carry ?' 'We have no wish,' replied Amjed, 'and my only  
injunction to thee is that thou set my brother undermost,  
that the blow may fall on me first ; and when thou hast  
slain us and returnest to the King and he asks thee, "What  
said they before their death ?" do thou answer, "Thy sons  
salute thee and say to thee, 'Thou knewest not if we were  
innocent or guilty, yet hast thou put us to death and hast  
not certified thyself of our guilt nor looked into our case.'"  
Then do thou repeat to him these verses :

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death ; Refuge I  
seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.  
Prime source are they of all the ills that fall upon mankind, Both in the  
fortunes of this world and matters of the faith.

'We desire of thee nought but this,' continued Amjed, Nigh  
'except that thou have patience with us, whilst I repeat cccxii.  
other two lines to my brother.' Then he wept sore and  
recited the following verses :

Examples many, thou and I, We have in kings of days gone by,  
How many, alack, have trod this road, Of great and small and low and  
high !



At this the treasurer wept, till his beard was wet, whilst  
Asaad's eyes filled with tears and he in turn repeated these  
verses :

**Fate**, when the thing itself is past, afflicteth with the trace, And weeping  
is not, of a truth, for body or form or face.<sup>1</sup>

**What** ails the nights?<sup>2</sup> May God blot out our error from the nights  
And may the hand of change bewray and bring them to disgrace !

**They** wreaked their malice to the full on Ibn ez Zubeir<sup>3</sup> erst, And on  
the House and Sacred Stone<sup>4</sup> his safeguard did embrace.

**Would** God, since Kharijeh<sup>5</sup> they took for Amrou's sacrifice, They'd  
ransomed Ali with whome'er they would of all our race !

Then, with cheeks stained with thick-coming tears, he  
recited these also :

**The** days and nights are fashioned for treachery and despite ; Yea, they  
are full of perfidy and knavish craft and sleight.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* but for the soul that animated them.

<sup>2</sup> The word "nights" (more commonly "days," sometimes also "days and nights," as in the verses immediately following) is constantly used in the sense of "fortune" or "fate" by the poets of the East.

<sup>3</sup> Abdallah ibn ez Zubeir revolted (A.D. 680) against Yezid (second Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty) and was proclaimed Khalif at Mecca, where he maintained himself till A.D. 692, when he was killed in the siege of that town by the famous Hejjaj, general of Abdumelik, the fifth Ommiade Khalif.

<sup>4</sup> The allusion here appears to be to the burning of part of Mecca, including the Temple and Kaabeh, during the (unsuccessful) siege by Hussein, A.D. 683.

<sup>5</sup> Three Muslim sectaries (Kharejites), considering the Khalif Ali (Mohammed's son-in-law), Muawiyeh (founder of the Ommiade dynasty) and Amr (or Amrou), the conqueror of Egypt, as the chief authors of 'the intestine discords which then (A.D. 661) ravaged Islam, conspired to assassinate them; but only succeeded in killing Ali, Muawiyeh escaping with a wound and the fanatic charged with the murder of Amr slaying Kharijeh, the chief of the police at Cairo, by mistake, in his stead. The above verses are part of a famous but very obscure elegy on the downfall of one of the Muslim dynasties in Spain, composed in the twelfth century by Ibn Abdoun el Andalousi, one of the most celebrated of the Spanish Arabic poets.

The mirage is their lustre of teeth, and to their eyes The horror of all darkness the kohl that keeps them bright.

My crime against them (hateful their nature is!) is but The sword's crime, when the sworder sets on into the fight.

Then he sobbed and said :

O thou that seeketh the worthless world, give ear to me and know The very net of ruin it is and quarry of dole and woe ;

A stead, whom it maketh laugh to-day, to-morrow it maketh weep: Out on it then for a dwelling-place, since it is even so !

Its raids and its onsets are never done, nor can its bondsman win To free himself from its iron clutch by dint of stress and throe.

How many an one in its vanities hath gloried and taken pride, Till froward and arrogant thus he grew and did all bounds o'ergero !

Then did she<sup>1</sup> turn him the buckler's back and give him to drink therein Full measure and set her to take her wreak of the favours she did show.

For know that her blows fall sudden and swift and unawares, though long The time of forbearance be and halt the coming of fate and slow.

So look to thyself, lest life in the world pass idle and profitless by, And see that thou fail not of taking thought to the end of all below.

Cast loose from the chains of the love and the wish of the world and thou shalt find Guidance and help unto righteousness and peace of heart, I trow.

When he had made an end of these verses, he clipped his brother in his arms, till they seemed as it were one body, and the treasurer, raising his sword, was about to strike them, when, behold, his horse took fright at the wind of his upraised hand and breaking its tether, fled into the desert. Now the horse was worth a thousand dinars and on his back was a splendid saddle, worth much money: so the treasurer threw down his sword, in great concern, and ran after him, to catch him. The horse galloped on, snorting and neighing and pawing the earth in his fright, till he raised a cloud of dust, and presently coming to a wood, fled into the midst of it, whither

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* fortune. The word *dunya* (world) is constantly used in poetry to signify "fortune" or "the fortune of this world."

the treasurer followed him. Now there was in this wood a terrible lion, foul of face, with eyes that cast forth sparks; his look was grim and his aspect struck terror into men's souls. He heard the noise made by the horse and came out to see what was to do. Presently the treasurer turned and saw the lion making towards him; but found no way of escape, nor had he his sword with him. So he said in himself, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! This stress is come upon me because of Amjed and Asaad; and indeed this journey was unblest from the first!' Meanwhile Amjed and Asaad were grievously oppressed by the heat and grew sore athirst, so that their tongues hung out and they cried for succour; but none came to their relief and they said, 'Would God we were dead and at peace from this torment! But we know not whither the treasurer's horse hath fled, that he has gone and left us bound. If he would but come back and kill us, it were easier to us than to suffer this torture.' 'O my brother,' said Asaad, 'be patient and the relief of God (blessed and exalted be He) will surely come to us; for the horse ran not away save of His favour towards us, and nought irks us but this thirst.' So saying, he stretched himself and strained right and left, till he burst his bonds; then he unbound his brother and taking up the Amir's sword, said, 'By Allah, we will not go hence, till we know what is come of him!' So they followed the track, till it led them to the wood and they said to one another, 'Of a surety, the horse and the treasurer have not overgone this wood.' Quoth Asaad, 'Stay thou here, whilst I enter the wood and search it.' 'I will not let thee go in alone,' answered Amjed. 'We will both go in; so if we escape, we shall escape together, and if we perish, we shall perish together.' So they entered both and found the lion standing over the treasurer, who lay like a sparrow in his grip, calling upon God for



help and lifting his hands to heaven. When Amjed saw this, he took the sword and running to the lion, smote him between the eyes and laid him dead on the ground. The Amir arose, marvelling at this, and seeing Amjed and Asaad his lord's sons, standing there, cast himself at their feet and exclaimed, 'By Allah, O my lords, it were foul wrong in me to put you to death! May the man never be who would kill you! Indeed, I will ransom you with my life.' Then he rose and embracing them, enquired how they had loosed their bonds and come thither, whereupon they told him how the bonds of one of them had fallen loose and he had unbound the other, that they might quit their intent, and how they had followed his track till they came upon him. He thanked them for their deed and went with them forth of the wood, where they said to him, 'O uncle, do our father's bidding.' 'God forbid,' answered he, 'that I should draw near to you with hurt! I mean to take your clothes and clothe you with mine; then will I fill two vials with the lion's blood and go back to the King and tell him I have put you to death. But as for you, fare ye forth into the lands, for God's earth is wide; and know, O my lords, that it irks me to part from you.' At this, they all fell a-weeping; then the two youths put off their clothes and the treasurer covered them with his own. Moreover, he filled two vials with the lion's blood and making two parcels of the princes' clothes, set them before him on his horse's back. Then he took leave of them and making his way back to the city, went in to King Kemerezzeman and kissed the earth before him. The King saw him pale and troubled and deeming this came of the slaughter of the two princes (though in truth it came of his adventure with the lion) rejoiced and said to him, 'Hast thou done the business?' 'Yes, O our lord,' answered the treasurer and gave him the two parcels of clothes and the two vials of blood. 'How bore they

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themselves,' asked the King, 'and did they give thee any charge?' 'I found them patient and resigned to their fate,' answered the treasurer; 'and they said to me, "Verily, our father is excusable; bear him our salutation and say to him, 'Thou art quit of our blood; ' and repeat to him the following verses :

Women are very devils, made to work us dole and death ; Refuge I  
seek with God Most High from all their craft and scaith.

Prime source are they of all the ills that fall upon mankind, Both in the  
fortunes of this world and matters of the faith."

When the King heard this, he bowed his head a long while and knew this to mean that they had wrongfully been put to death. Then he bethought himself of the perfidy of women and the calamities brought about by them, and opening the two parcels fell to turning over **Night** his sons' clothes and weeping. Presently, he found in **ccxxb.** the pocket of his son Asaad's clothes a letter in Queen Budour's hand, enclosing the tresses of her hair, and reading it, knew that the prince had been falsely accused. Then he searched Amjed's clothes and found in his pocket a letter in the handwriting of Queen Heyat en Nufous, enclosing the tresses of her hair; so he opened and read it and knew that Amjed also had been wronged; whereupon he beat hand upon hand and exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God! I have slain my sons unjustly.' And he buffeted his face, crying out, 'Alas, my sons! Alas, my long grief!' Then he bade build two tombs in one house, which he styled 'House of Lamentations,' and let grave thereon his sons' names; and he threw himself on Amjed's tomb, weeping and groaning and lamenting, and repeated these verses :

O moon, that hast set beneath the earth for aye, For whose loss weep  
the shining stars of the sky,

O wand, after whom no more shall the flexile grace Of the willow-like  
bending shape enchant the eye,

My sight I've bereft of thee, of my jealousy, And ne'er shall I see thee again, till I come to die.

I'm drowned in the sea of my tears, for sheer unrest ; Indeed, for sleepless sorrow in hell am I.

Then he threw himself on Asaad's tomb and recited the following verses, whilst the tears poured from his eyes :

Fain had I shared with thee, dear heart, in death and ill ; But God, that ordereth all, willed other than my will.

All that I see, my dole makes black, whilst from my eyes All black I've blotted out with weeping all my fill.<sup>1</sup>

I weep and never stint ; mine eyes run never dry ; My entrails ulcered are and blood and tears distil.

Sore, sore it irketh me to see thee in a place<sup>2</sup> Where slaves and kings alike foregather, will or nill.

Then he forsook his friends and intimates, and denying himself to his women and his family, shut himself up in the House of Lamentations, where he passed his time in weeping for his sons.

Meanwhile, Amjed and Asaad fared on into the desert a whole month's journey, eating of the fruits of the earth and drinking of the rain-pools, till their travel brought them to a mountain of black stone, where the road divided in two, one skirting the foot of the mountain and the other leading to its summit. They took the former way, for fear of thirst, and followed it five days, but saw no end to it and were overcome with weariness, being unused to walking in mountains or elsewhere. At last, despairing of coming to the end of the road, they retraced their steps and taking the other, that led over the mountain, followed it all that day, till nightfall, when Asaad, weary with much travel, said to Amjed, 'O my brother, I can go no farther, for I am exceeding weak.' 'Courage,' replied Amjed ;

<sup>1</sup> This line is a characteristic example of the antithetical conceits so common in Oriental poetry. The meaning is, "My grief makes all I behold seem black to me, whilst my tears have washed out all the colour from my eyes."

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the tomb.

'may be God will send us relief.' So they walked on part of the night, till the darkness closed in upon them, when Asaad became beyond measure weary and saying, 'O my brother, I am worn out and spent with walking,' threw himself on the ground and wept. Amjed took him in his arms and fared on with him, halting bytimes to rest, till break of day, when they came to the mountain-top and found there a stream of running water and by it a pomegranate-tree and a prayer-niche. They could hardly believe their eyes, but, sitting down by the spring, drank of its water and ate of the fruit of the tree; after which they lay down and slept till sunrise, when they washed in the spring and eating of the pomegranates, slept again till the time of afternoon-prayer. Then they thought to continue their journey, but Asaad could not walk, for his feet were swollen. So they abode there three days, till they were rested, after which they set out again and fared on over the mountain days and nights, well-nigh perished for thirst, till they came in sight of a city afar off, at which they rejoiced and made towards it. When they drew near it, they thanked God the Most High and Amjed said to Asaad, 'O my brother, sit here, whilst I go to yonder city and see what and whose it is and where we are in God's wide world, that we may know through what lands we have passed in crossing this mountain, whose skirts if we had followed, we had not reached this city in a whole year: so praised be God for safety!' 'By Allah,' replied Asaad, 'none shall go but myself, and may I be thy ransom! If thou leave me, I shall imagine a thousand things and suffer tortures of anxiety on thine account, for I cannot brook thine absence from me.' 'Go then,' rejoined Amjed, 'and do not tarry.' So Asaad took money and leaving his brother awaiting him, descended the mountain and fared on, till he entered the city. As he passed through the streets, he met an old man, with a beard that







flowed down upon his breast and was parted in twain; he bore a walking-staff in his hand and was richly clad, with a great red turban on his head. When Asaad saw him, he wondered at his mien and habit; nevertheless, he went up to him and saluting him, enquired the way to the market. The old man smiled in his face and said, 'O my son, meseems thou art a stranger?' 'Yes,' answered Asaad; 'I am a stranger.' 'O my son,' rejoined the other, 'verily, thou gladdenest our country with thy presence and makest thine own land desolate by reason of thine absence. What wantest thou of the market?' 'O uncle,' replied Asaad, 'I have an elder brother, with whom I have journeyed these three months, for we come from a far country. When we sighted this city, I left my brother in the mountain and came hither, purposing to buy food and what else and return therewith to him, that we might feed thereon.' 'Rejoice in all good, O my son!' said the old man. 'Know that to-day I give a marriage-feast, to which I have bidden many guests, and I have made ready great plenty of the best and most delicious meats that the heart can desire. So, if thou wilt come home with me, I will give thee freely all thou lackest, without price. Moreover, I will teach thee the ways of the city; and praised be God, O my son, that thou hast fallen in with me and none other!' 'As thou wilt,' answered Asaad; 'but make haste, for my brother awaits me and his whole heart is with me.' So the old man took Asaad by the hand, smiling in his face and saying, 'Glory be to Him who hath delivered thee from the people of this city!' Then he carried him to a narrow lane and entering a spacious house, brought him into a saloon, wherein were forty old men, seated in a circle about a lighted fire, to which they were doing worship and prostrating themselves. When Asaad saw this he was confounded and his flesh quaked, though he knew not what they were;

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and the old man said to them, 'O elders of the fire, how blessed is this day!' Then he cried out, saying, 'Ho, Ghezban!' Whereupon there came out to him a tall black slave of forbidding aspect, grim-visaged and flat-nosed. The old man made a sign to him, and he bound Asaad straitly; after which the old man said to him, 'Bear him to the dungeon under the earth and bid my slave-girl Kewam torture him day and night and give him a cake of bread to eat morning and evening, against the time come of the voyage to the Blue Sea and the Mountain of Fire, when we will slaughter him on the mountain as a sacrifice.' So the black carried him out at another door and raising a flag in the floor, discovered a flight of twenty steps leading to a chamber under the earth, into which he descended with him and laying his feet in irons, committed him to the slave-girl and went away. Meanwhile, the old men said to one another, 'When the day of the Festival of the Fire comes, we will sacrifice him on the mountain, as a propitiatory offering to the Fire.' Presently the damsel went down to him and beat him grievously, till the blood streamed from his sides and he fainted away; after which she set at his head a cake of bread and a cruse of brackish water and went away and left him. In the middle of the night, he revived and found himself bound and sore with beating: so he wept bitterly and recalling his former estate of ease and honour and lordship and dominion, groaned and lamented and repeated the following verses:

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Halt by the ruins of the house and question of our fate Nor think we  
sojourn in the land, as in our first estate.

Fortune, the sunderer, hath wrought the severance of our loves; Yet  
doth our enemies' despite against us nought abate.

A filthy cockatrice is set to torture me with whips, Whose breast against  
me is fulfilled with rancour and with hate.

But haply God shall yet reknit our severed loves again And turn our  
enemies from us with vengeance stern and strait.

Then he put out his hand and finding the bread and water at his head, ate enough to keep life in him and drank a little water, but could get no sleep for the swarms of bugs and lice. As soon as it was day, the slave-girl came down to him and changed his clothes, which were drenched with blood and stuck to him, so that his skin came off with the shirt; wherefore he shrieked aloud and cried, 'Alas!' and said, 'O my God, if this be Thy pleasure, increase it upon me! O Lord, verily Thou art not unmindful of him that oppresses me: do Thou then avenge me upon him!' And he groaned and repeated the following verses:

Lord, I submit myself to that Thou dost decree, Contented to endure, if  
but it pleasure Thee;  
To suffer at Thy will with patience **nor** complain, Though I be cast to  
burn on coals of tamarisk-tree.<sup>1</sup>  
Mine enemies oppress and torture me; but Thou With benefits belike  
shall 'quite and comfort me.  
Far be't from Thee to let th' oppressor go **unscathed**; Thou art my hope  
and stay, O Lord of Destiny!

And what another says:

Avert thy face from thought-taking and care And trust to fate to order  
thine affair;  
For many a weary and a troublous thing Is, in its issue, solaceful and  
fair.  
That which was strait is oftentimes made wide And straitened that,  
which easy was whilere.  
God orders all, according to His will; Gainsay Him not in what He  
doth prepare,  
But trust in happy fortune near at hand, Wherein thou shalt forget the  
woes that were.

Then the slave-girl beat him till he fainted away and throwing him a cake of bread and a cruse of brackish water, went away and left him sad and lonely, bound in chains of iron, with the blood streaming from his sides

<sup>1</sup> The wood of which makes a peculiarly fierce and lasting fire.



**N**ight and far from those he loved. So he called to mind his  
 cccix. brother and his former high estate and repeated the  
 following verses, shedding floods of tears the while :

How long wilt thou wage war on me, O Fate, and bear away My brethren  
 from me? Hold thy hand and spare awhile, I pray !  
 Is it not time, O thou whose heart is as the rock, that thou My long  
 estrangement and my dole shouldst pity and allay ?  
 Ill hast thou wrought to those I love and made my toes exult With all  
 that thou hast wreaked on me of ruin and dismay.  
 Yea, for the pains he sees me brook of exile and desire And loneliness,  
 my foe-man's heart is solaceful and gay.  
 Thou'rt not content with what is fallen on me of bitter dole, Of loss of  
 friends and swollen eyes, affliction and affray,  
 But I must lie and rot, to boot, in prison strait and dour, Where nought  
 but gnawing of my hands I have for help and stay,  
 And tears that shower in torrents down, as from the rain-charged clouds,  
 And fire of yearning, never quenched, that rages night and day,  
 And memory and longing pain and melancholy thought And sobs and  
 sighs and groans and cries of " Woe ! " and " Wellaway ! "  
 Passion and soul-destroying grief I suffer, and unto Desire, that knoweth  
 not relent nor end, am fallen a prey.  
 No kindly soul is found to have compassion on my case And with his  
 visits and his grace my misery allay.  
 Lives there a true and tender friend, who doth compassionate My sick-  
 ness and my long unrest, that unto him I may  
 Make moan of all that I endure for dole and dreariness And of my sleep-  
 less eyes, oppressed of wakefulness alway ?  
 My night in torments is prolonged ; I burn, without reprieve, In flames  
 of heart-consuming care that rage in me for aye.  
 The bug and flea do drink my blood, even as one drinks of wine, Poured  
 by the hand of damask-lipped and slender-waisted may.  
 The body of me, amongst the lice, is as an orphan's good, That in an  
 unjust Cadi's hands doth dwindle and decay.  
 My dwelling-place is in a tomb, three scanty cubits wide, Wherein  
 shackles and in bonds I languish night and day.  
 My tears my wine are and my chains my music : my dessert Woeworthy  
 thought and cares the bed whereon myself I lay.

Meanwhile his brother abode, awaiting him, till mid-day,  
 but he returned not : whereupon Amjed's heart fluttered

and the tears welled from his eyes. The pangs of severance were sore upon him and he wept sore, exclaiming, 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my companion! Alas, my grief! I fear me we are separated!' Then he descended the mountain, with the tears running down his cheeks, and entering the city, made for the market. He asked the folk the name of the city and of its people, and they said, 'This is called the City of the Magians, and its people serve the Fire, not the Omnipotent King.' Then he enquired of the City of Ebony and they answered, 'It is a year's journey thither by land and six months' by sea: it was governed erst by a King called Armanous, but he took to son-in-law a prince called Kemerezzeman, distinguished for justice and loyalty, munificence and benevolence, and made him king in his stead.' When Amjed heard tell of his father, he groaned and wept and lamented and knew not whither to go. However, he bought food and carried it with him, till he came to a retired spot, where he sat down, thinking to eat: but, recalling his brother, he fell a-weeping and ate but a morsel to stay his stomach, and that against his will. Then he rose and walked about the city, seeking news of his brother, till he saw a Muslim, a tailor, sitting in his shop; so he sat down by him and told him his story; whereupon quoth the tailor, 'If he have fallen into the hands of any of the Magians, thou shalt hardly see him again: yet it may be God will reunite you. But thou, O my brother,' added he, 'wilt thou lodge with me?' 'Yes,' answered Amjed, and the tailor rejoiced at this. So Amjed abode with him many days, what while the tailor comforted him and exhorted him to patience and taught him his craft, till he became expert. One day, he went forth to the sea-shore and washed his clothes; after which he entered the bath and put on clean raiment. Then he walked about the streets, to divert himself, and presently fell in with a woman of

surpassing beauty and symmetry, unequalled for grace and loveliness. When she saw him, she raised her face-veil and winked to him and ogled him, reciting the following verses :

Afar, I saw thee coming and cast mine eyes down straight, As if, O  
loveling slender, thou wert the very sun.

Indeed, thou art the fairest of all beholden ; yea, Even than thyself thou'rt  
fairer, since yesterday was done.

Were beauty but allotted, to every one his due, One-fifth of it were  
Joseph's or but a part of one,

And all the rest were surely thine own and only thine ; May all men be  
thy ransom, yea, every mother's son !

When he heard this, his heart inclined to her and the hands of love sported with him : so he winked to her in answer and repeated the following verses :

Over the rose of the cheek, the thorns of the eyelashes rise ; So who  
shall adventure himself to gather the flowery prize ?

Lift not your hands to the rose, for long have the lashes waged war And  
poured on us battle, because we lifted to it-ward our eyes.

Tell her the tyrant who plays and yet is temptation itself, (Though still  
more seductive she'd be, if she dealt but in loyaller wise),

I see that, for beauty like thine, exposure's the surest of guards, For  
the veiling thy face but augments its seductions and adds to our sighs ;

Like the sun, on whose visage undimmed the eye still refuses to look,  
And yet we may gaze at our ease, when the thinnest of clouds o'er  
it lies.

The honey's protected, forsooth, by the sting of the bees of the hive :  
So question the guards of the camp why they stay us in this our  
emprise.

If my slaughter be what they desire, let them put off their rancours and  
stand From between us and leave her to deal with me and my life  
at her guise ;

For, I wot, not so deadly are they, when they set on a foe with their  
swords, As the eyes of the fair with the mole, when her glances  
upon us she plies.

At this she sighed deeply and signing to him again,  
repeated the following verses :

**T**is thou that hast trodden the road of aversion and coyness ; not I  
Vouchsafe me the promised delight, for the time of fulfilment draws  
nigh.

**O** thou that mak'st morning to dawn with the lustre and light of thy  
brows And eke, with thy brow-locks unloosed, the night to sink  
down from the sky,

Thou hast, with an idol's aspect, seduced me and made me thy slave  
And hast stirred me up troubles galore in many a season past by.

**A**nd yet it is just that my heart with the ardour of passion should burn,  
For the fire is their due who adore aught other than God the Most  
High.

Thou sellest the like of myself for nothing, yea, free, without price ; If  
needs thou must sell, and no help, take a price, then, of those that  
would buy.

When he heard this, he said to her, 'Wilt thou come to  
my lodging or shall I go with thee to thine?' At this,  
she hung her head bashfully and repeated the words of the  
Most High, 'Men shall have precedence over women, for  
that God hath preferred these over those.'<sup>1</sup> By this, Amjed  
understood that she wished to go with him and felt him-  
self bounden to find a place wherein to receive her, but  
was ashamed to carry her to the house of his host, the  
tailor. So he walked on and she followed him from street  
to street, till she was tired and said to him, 'O my lord,  
where is thy house?' 'But a little way before us,' answered  
he. Then he turned aside into a handsome street, followed  
by the young lady, and walked on, till he came to the end,  
when he found it had no issue and exclaimed, 'There is  
no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the  
Supreme!' Then, raising his eyes, he saw, at the upper  
end of the street, a great door, with two stone benches;  
but it was locked. So he sat down on one of the benches  
and the lady on the other; and she said to him, 'O my lord,  
wherefore waitest thou?' He bowed his head awhile, then  
raised it and answered, 'I am waiting for my servant, who  
has the key: for I bade him make me ready meat and

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<sup>1</sup> *Koran* iv. 38.



drink and flowers for the wine-service against my return from the bath.' But he said in himself, 'Belike she will grow tired of waiting and go about her business, leaving me here, when I will go my own way.' However, when she was weary of waiting, she said, 'O my lord, thy servant tarries long; and here are we waiting in the street.' And she took a stone and went up to the lock. 'Be not in haste,' said Amjed; 'but have patience till the servant comes.' However, she hearkened not to him, but smote the lock with the stone and broke it in half, whereupon the door opened. Quoth he, 'What possessed thee to do this?' 'Pooh, pooh, my lord!' answered she. 'What matters it? Is not the house thine?' 'Yes,' said he; 'but there was no need to break the lock.' Then she entered, leaving Amjed confounded and knowing not what to do for fear of the people of the house; but she said to him, 'Why dost thou not enter, O light of mine eyes and darling of my heart?' 'I hear and obey,' answered he; 'but my servant tarries long upon me and I know not if he have done aught of what I bade him or not.' So saying, he entered, sore in fear of the people of the house, and found himself in a handsome saloon, full of buffets and niches and settles, furnished with stuffs of silk and brocade. It had four raised recesses, each facing other, and in the midst was a fountain of costly fashion, on whose margin stood a covered tray (of meats), with a leather table-cloth hanging up and dishes set with jewels, full of fruits and sweet-scented flowers. Hard by stood drinking vessels and a candlestick with a candle therein. The place was full of precious stuffs, and therein were chests and stools set, on each of which latter lay a parcel of clothes and a purse full of gold and silver. The floor was paved with marble and the house bore witness in every part to its owner's fortune. When Amjed saw all this, he was confounded and said in himself, 'I am a lost man! Verily, we

are God's and to God we return!' As for the lady, she was transported at what she saw and said to him, 'By Allah, O my lord, thy servant has not failed of his duty; for see, he has swept the place and cooked the meat and set on the fruit; and indeed I come at the best of times.' But he paid no heed to her, his heart being taken up with fear of the people of the house; and she said, 'Fie, O my lord, O my heart! What ails thee to stand thus?' Then she sighed and giving him a kiss, that sounded like the cracking of a walnut, said, 'O my lord, and thou have bidden other than me, I will gird my middle and serve her and thee.' Amjed laughed from an angerful heart and sat down, panting and saying in himself, 'Alack, how I shall smart for it, when the owner of the house returns!' She seated herself by him and fell to jesting and laughing, whilst he sat careful and frowning, thinking a thousand thoughts and saying in himself, 'The master of the house will surely come and what shall I say to him? He will assuredly kill me without mercy.' Presently, she rose and tucking up her sleeves, took a table, on which she laid the cloth and the tray of food; then set it before Amjed and began to eat, saying, 'Eat, O my lord.' So he came forward and ate; but the food was not pleasant to him and he ceased not to look towards the door, till the lady had eaten her fill, when she took away the meats and setting on the dessert, fell to eating of the dried fruits. Then she brought the wine-service and opening the jar, filled a cup and gave it to Amjed, who took it, saying in himself, 'Alas! what will become of me, when the master of the house comes and sees me!' Presently, as he sat, with the cup in his hand and his eyes fixed on the vestibule, in came the master of the house, who was one of the chief men of the city, being Master of the Horse to the King. He had fitted up this house for his privy pleasures, that he might make merry therein and be private with

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whom he would, and had that day bidden one whom he loved and had made this entertainment for him. When, therefore, this man (whose name was Behadir and who was a kindly, liberal and open-handed man) came thither and found the door open and the lock broken, he entered softly and putting in his head at the door of the saloon, saw Amjed and the lady sitting, with the dish of fruit and the wine-jar before them. Amjed at that moment had the cup in his hand and his face turned to the door; and when his eyes met Behadir's, he turned pale and trembled in every nerve. Behadir, seeing his trouble, signed to him, with his finger on his lips, as who should say, 'Be silent and come hither to me.' So he set down the cup and rose, whereupon quoth the lady, 'Whither away?' He shook his head and signing to her that he wished to make water, went out into the corridor, barefoot. When he saw Behadir, he knew him for the master of the house; so he hastened to him and kissing his hands, said to him, 'God on thee, O my lord, before thou do me any hurt, hear what I have to say.' Then he told him who he was and what caused him leave his native land and royal state, and how he had not entered his house of his free will, but that it was the lady who had broken the lock and done all this. When Behadir heard his story and knew that he was a king's son, he inclined to him and taking compassion on him, said to him, 'O Amjed, hearken to me and do what I bid thee, and I will ensure thee safety from that thou fearest; but, if thou cross me, I will kill thee.' 'Command me as thou wilt,' answered Amjed. 'I will not gainsay thee in aught, for I am the freedman of thy bounty.' 'Then go back forthright into the saloon,' rejoined Behadir, 'and sit down in thy place and take thine ease. I will presently come in to thee, and when thou seest me (now my name is Behadir) do thou revile me and rail at me, saying, "Why hast thou tarried till now?" And accept no excuse from me, but



rise and beat me; and if thou spare me, I will do away thy life. Enter now and make merry and whatsoever thou seekest of me, I will bring thee forthwith. So pass the night as thou wilt and on the morrow go thy way. This in honour of thy strangerhood, for I love strangers and hold myself bounden to do them honour.' So Amjed kissed his hand and returning to the saloon, with his face clad in its native white and red, said to the lady, 'O my mistress, the place is gladdened by thy presence, and this is indeed a blessed night.' 'Verily,' said she, 'this is a wonderful change in thee, that thou now welcomest me so cordially!' 'By Allah, O my lady,' answered he, 'methought my servant Behadir had robbed me of some necklaces of jewels, worth ten thousand dinars each; however, when I went out but now, in concern for this, I sought for them and found them in their place. I know not why the knave tarries thus, and needs must I punish him for it.' She was satisfied with his answer, and they drank and sported and made merry, till near upon sundown, when Behadir came in to them, having changed his clothes and girt his middle and put on shoes, such as are worn of servants. He saluted and kissed the earth, then clasped his hands behind him and stood, with his head hanging down, as one who confesses to a fault. Amjed looked at him with angry eyes and said, 'Why hast thou tarried till now, O most pestilent of slaves?' 'O my lord,' answered Behadir, 'I was busy washing my clothes and knew not of thy being here; for thou hadst appointed me for nightfall and not for the daytime.' But Amjed cried out at him, saying, 'Thou liest, O vilest of slaves! By Allah, I must beat thee!' So he rose and laying Behadir on the ground, took a stick and beat him gingerly: but the lady sprang up and snatching the stick from his hand, laid on to Behadir so lustily, that the tears ran from his eyes and he ground his teeth together and called out for succour; whilst Amjed cried out to the



lady to hold her hand and she answered, 'Let me stay my anger on him;' till at last he snatched the stick from her hand and pushed her away. Behadir arose and wiping away his tears, waited upon them awhile; after which he swept the hall and lighted the lamps; but, as often as he went in and out, the lady railed at him and cursed him, till Amjed was wroth with her and said, 'For God's sake, leave my servant; he is not used to this.' Then they sat eating and drinking, whilst Behadir waited upon them, till midnight, when the latter, weary with service and beating, fell asleep in the midst of the hall and snored and snorted; whereupon the lady, who was heated with wine, said to Amjed, 'Arise, take the sword that hangs yonder and cut off this slave's head, or I will be the death of thee.' 'What possesses thee to kill my slave?' asked Amjed; and she answered, 'Our delight will not be fulfilled but by his death. If thou wilt not kill him, I will do it myself.' 'For God's sake,' cried Amjed, 'do not this thing!' 'It must be,' replied she and taking down the sword, drew it and made at Behadir to kill him; but Amjed said in himself, 'This man hath entreated us courteously and sheltered us and done us kindness and made himself my servant: and shall we requite him by killing him? This shall never be. Then he said to the lady, 'If my slave must be killed, better I should do it than thou.' So saying, he took the sword from her and raising his hand, smote her on the neck and made her head fly from her body. It fell upon Behadir, who awoke and sitting up, saw Amjed standing by him, with the bloodstained sword in his hand, and the damsel lying dead. He enquired what had passed, and Amjed told him what she had said, adding, 'Nothing would serve her but she must kill thee; and this is her reward.' Behadir rose and kissing the prince's hand, said to him, 'Would God thou hadst spared her! But now there is nothing for it but to rid us of her forthright, before the

day break.' So saying, he wrapped the body in a mantle and laying it in a basket, said to Amjed, 'Thou art a stranger here and knowest no one: so sit thou here and await my return. If I come back, I will assuredly do thee great good service and use my endeavour to have news of thy brother; but if I return not by sunrise, know that all is over with me; in which case the house and all it contains are thine, and peace be on thee.' Then he shouldered the basket and going forth, made for the sea, thinking to throw it therein: but as he drew near the shore, he turned and found himself surrounded by the chief of the police and his officers. They knew him and wondered and opened the basket, in which they found the slain woman. So they seized him and laid him in irons till the morning, when they carried him and the basket to the King and acquainted the latter with the case. The King was sore enraged and said to Behadir, 'Out on thee! This is not the first time thou hast slain folk and cast them into the sea and taken their goods. How many murders hast thou done ere this?' Night  
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Behadir hung his head, and the King cried out at him, saying, 'Woe to thee! Who killed this young lady?' 'O my lord,' answered Behadir, 'I killed her, and there is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!' At this the King's anger redoubled and he commanded to hang him. So the hangman and the chief of the police went down with him, by the King's commandment, and paraded him through the streets and markets of the town, whilst a crier forewent them, bidding all the folk to the execution of Behadir, the King's Master of the Horse.

Meanwhile, Amjed awaited his host's return till the day broke and the sun rose, and when he saw that he came not, he exclaimed, 'There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme! I wonder what is come of him?' As he sat musing, he heard the crier pro-

claiming aloud Behadir's sentence and bidding the people to his hanging at midday ; whereat he wept and exclaimed, 'Verily, we are God's and to Him we return ! He means to sacrifice himself unjustly for my sake, when it was I killed her. By Allah, this shall never be !' Then he went out and shutting the door after him, hurried through the streets, till he overtook Behadir, when he accosted the chief of the police and said to him, 'O my lord, put not Behadir to death, for he is innocent. By Allah, none killed her but I.' When the Master of the Police heard this, he took them both and carrying them before the King, told him what Amjed had said ; whereupon he looked at the prince and said to him, 'Didst thou kill the young lady ?' 'Yes,' answered he, and the King said, 'Tell me why thou killedst her, and speak the truth.' 'O King,' replied Amjed, 'indeed, it is a rare event and a strange matter that hath befallen me : were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as a lesson to whoso can profit by admonition.' Then he told him his whole story and all that had befallen him and his brother, first and last ; whereat the King wondered greatly and said to him, 'O youth, I know thee now to be excusable. Wilt thou be my Vizier ?' 'I hear and obey,' answered Amjed ; whereupon the King bestowed magnificent dresses of honour on him and Behadir and gave him a handsome house, with servants and officers and all things needful, appointing him stipends and allowances and bidding him make search for his brother Asaad. So Amjed sat down in the seat of office and governed and did justice and invested and deposed and gave and took. Moreover, he sent out a crier to cry his brother throughout the city, and he made proclamation in the streets and markets many days, but heard no news of Asaad nor happened on any trace of him.

Meanwhile, the Magians ceased not to torture Asaad, night and day, for a whole year's space, till the day of

their festival drew near, when the old man (whose name was Behram) made ready for the voyage and fitted out a ship for himself. When all was ready, he laid Asaad in a chest and locking it, transported it to the ship. As fate would have it, Amjed was at that very time standing looking upon the sea; and when he saw the men carrying the chest and other gear on board the ship, his heart throbbed and he called to his servants to bring him his horse. Then, mounting with a company of his officers, he rode down to the port and halted before the Magian's ship, which he commanded his men to search. So they boarded the vessel and searched it in every part, but found nothing and returned and told Amjed, who mounted again and rode back to his palace, with a troubled mind. As he entered, he cast his eyes on the wall and saw written thereon the following verses, which when he read, he called to mind his brother and wept:

Belovéd ones, for all you're absent from my sight, Yet in my heart and thought you have your sojourn still.

You leave me here to pine and languish for desire; You rob mine eyes of sleep and sleep yourselves your fill.

Meanwhile, Behram embarked and shouted to his crew to make sail in all haste. So they loosed the sails and departing, fared on without ceasing many days and nights; and every other day, Behram took out Asaad and gave him a little bread and water, till they drew near the Mountain of Fire, when there came out on them a contrary wind and the sea rose against them, so that they were driven out of their course into strange waters and came in sight of a city builded upon the shore, with a citadel whose windows overlooked the sea. Now the ruler of this city was a queen called Merjaneh, and the captain said to Behram, 'O my lord, we have strayed from our course and come to the island of Queen Merjaneh, who is a devout Muslim; and if she know that we are Magians, she will



take our ship and slay us to the last man. Yet needs must we put in here to rest [and refit].’ Quoth Behram, ‘Let us clothe this Muslim we have with us in a slave’s habit and carry him ashore with us, so that, when the queen sees him, she will think and say, “This is a slave.” As for me, I will tell her that I am a dealer in white slaves and that I had with me many, but have sold all but this one, whom I have retained to keep my accounts, for he can read and write.’ And the captain said, ‘This device should serve well.’ Presently, they reached the city and slackening sail, cast anchor; when, behold, Queen Mer-janeh came down to them, attended by her guards, and halting before the ship, called out to the captain, who landed and kissed the earth before her. Quoth she, ‘What is the lading of thy ship and whom hast thou with thee?’ ‘O queen of the age,’ answered he, ‘I have with me a merchant who deals in slaves.’ And she said, ‘Bring him to me;’ whereupon Behram came ashore to her, followed by Asaad in a slave’s habit, and kissed the earth before her. ‘What is thy condition?’ asked the queen; and Behram answered, ‘I am a slave-dealer.’ Then she looked at Asaad and taking him for a slave, said to him, ‘What is thy name?’ Quoth he, ‘Dost thou ask my present or my former name?’ ‘Hast thou then two names?’ asked she, and he answered (and indeed his voice was choked with tears), ‘Yes; my name aforetime was Asaad,<sup>1</sup> but now it is Muterr.’<sup>2</sup> Her heart inclined to him and she said, ‘Canst thou write?’ ‘Yes,’ answered he; and she gave him ink-horn and pen and paper and said to him, ‘Write somewhat, that I may see it.’ So he wrote the following verses:

**Harkye,** O thou that judgest, what can a mortal do, When fate, in all conditions, doth him to death ensue?

**It casts him in the ocean,** bound hand and foot, and says, “Beware lest with the water you wet yourself, look you!”

<sup>1</sup> Most happy

<sup>2</sup> Wretched.



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When she read this, she had compassion upon him and said to Behram, 'Sell me this slave.' 'O my lady,' answered he, 'I cannot sell him, for he is the only slave I have left.' Quoth she, 'I must have him of thee, either by purchase or as a gift.' But Behram said, 'I will neither sell him nor give him.' Whereat she was wroth and taking Asaad by the hand, carried him up to the palace and sent to Behram, saying, 'Except thou set sail and depart our city this very night, I will seize all thy goods and break up thy ship.' When the message reached the Magian, he was sore troubled and said, 'Verily, this voyage is every way unfortunate.' Then he made ready and took all he needed and awaited the coming of the night, to resume his voyage, saying to the sailors, 'Provide yourselves and fill the water-skins, that we may set sail at the last of the night.' So the sailors did their occasions and awaited the coming of the night.

To return to Queen Merjaneh. When she had brought Asaad into the palace, she opened the windows overlooking the sea and bade her handmaids bring food. Accordingly, they set food before Asaad and herself, and they ate, after which the queen called for wine and fell to drinking with him. Now God (may He be exalted and glorified!) filled her heart with love for Asaad and she plied him with wine, till his reason fled and presently he rose and left the hall, to do an occasion. Seeing a door open, he went out and walked on, till he came to a vast garden full of all manner fruits and flowers and sitting down under a tree, did his occasion. Then he went up to a fountain in the garden and made the ablution and washed his hands and face, after which he would have risen to go away; but the air smote him and he fell back, with his clothes undone, and slept, and night overcame him thus.

Meanwhile, Behram, the night being come, cried out to the sailors to spread sail and depart. 'We hear and obey,'

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answered they ; 'but give us time to fill our water-skins.' Then they landed with their water-skins and coasting the palace, found nothing but walls : so they climbed over into the garden and followed the track of feet, that led them to the fountain, where they found Asaad lying on his back, asleep. They knew him and taking him up, climbed the wall again with him, after they had filled their skins, and carried him back in haste to Behram, to whom said they, 'Beat thy drums and sound thy pipes ; for we have found thy prisoner, whom Queen Merjaneh took from thee by force, and have brought him back to thee.' And they threw Asaad down before him. When Behram saw him, his heart leapt for joy and his breast dilated with gladness. Then he bestowed largesse on the sailors and bade them weigh anchor in haste. So they set sail forthright, intending for the Mountain of Fire, and stayed not their course till the morning.

As for Queen Merjaneh, she abode awhile, awaiting Asaad's return ; and when she saw that he came not, she rose and sought him, but found no trace of him. Then she bade her women light flambeaux and search for him, whilst she herself went forth and seeing the garden-door open, knew that he had gone thither. So she went out and finding his slippers lying by the fountain, searched the garden in every part, but found no sign of him. Nevertheless, she gave not over the search till morning, when she enquired for the Magian's ship and was told that it had set sail in the first watch of the night ; wherefore she knew that they had taken Asaad with them and this was grievous to her and she was angry. So she bade equip ten great ships forthwith and arming herself, embarked in one of them, with her guards and women and troops, richly accoutred and armed for war. They spread the sails and she said to the captain, 'If you overtake the Magian's ship, ye shall have of me dresses of honour and

largesse; but if ye let it escape, I will kill you all.' Whereat fear and great hope fell upon the seamen, and they sailed three days and nights, till, on the fourth day, they sighted Behram's ship. Ere ended day, they came up with it and surrounded it on all sides, even as Behram had taken Asaad forth of the chest and was beating and torturing him, whilst the prince cried out for succour and relief, but found neither helper nor deliverer; and indeed he was sorely tormented with much beating. Presently Behram chanced to look up and seeing himself encompassed by the queen's ships, as the white of the eye encompasses the black, gave himself up for lost and groaned and said to Asaad, 'Out on thee, O Asaad! This is all thy doing; but, by Allah, I will kill thee ere I die myself' Then he bade the sailors throw him overboard; so they took him by the hands and feet and cast him into the sea and he sank. But God (may He be exalted and glorified!) willed that his life should be saved and that his last day should be deferred; so He caused him to rise again and he struck out with his hands and feet, till the Almighty gave him ease and relief and the waves bore him far from the Magian's ship and threw him ashore. He landed, scarce crediting his escape, and putting off his clothes, wrung them and spread them out to dry, whilst he sat, naked and weeping over his misfortunes and desolate and forlorn condition and repeating the following verses:

**My fortitude fails me for travail and pain; My patience is spent, my endeavour in vain;**

**My sinews are sundered; O Lord of all lords, To whom but his Lord shall the wretched complain?**

Then, rising, he donned his clothes and set out at a venture, knowing not whither he went. He fared on day and night, eating of the herbs of the earth and the fruits of the trees and drinking of the streams, till he came in

**N**ight sight of a city ; whereupon he rejoiced and hurried on ;  
 cxxxvi. but before he reached it, the night overtook him and the gates were shut. Now, as chance would have it, this was the very city in which he had been a prisoner and to whose king his brother Amjed was vizier. When he saw the gate was shut, he turned back and made for the burial-ground, where finding a tomb without a door, he entered and lay down and fell asleep, with his face in his sleeve.

Meanwhile, Queen Merjaneh, coming up with Behram's ship, questioned him of Asaad ; but he swore to her that he was not with him and that he knew nothing of him. She searched the ship, but found no trace of Asaad, so took Behram and carrying him back to her castle, would have put him to death ; but he ransomed himself from her with all his good and his ship and she released him and his men. They went forth from her, hardly believing in their escape, and fared on ten days' journey, till they came to their own city and found the gate shut, it being eventide. So they made for the burial-ground, thinking to lie the night there, and going round about the tombs, as fate would have it, saw that, in which Asaad lay, open ; whereat Behram marvelled and said, 'I must look into this tomb.' Then he entered and found Asaad lying asleep, with his head on his sleeve ; so he raised his head and looking in his face, knew him for him on whose account he had lost his goods and his ship, and said, 'Art thou yet alive ?' Then he bound him and gagged him, without further parley, and carried him to his house, where he clapped heavy shackles on his feet and lowered him into the underground dungeon aforesaid, affected to the tormenting of Muslims, bidding a daughter of his, by name Bustan, torture him night and day, till the next year, when they would again visit the Mountain of Fire and offer him up as a sacrifice there. Then he beat him grievously and locking the dungeon door upon him, gave the keys to his

daughter. By and by, she opened the door and went down to beat him, but finding him a comely sweet-faced youth, with arched brows and melting black eyes, fell in love with him and said to him, 'What is thy name?' 'My name is Asaad,'<sup>1</sup> answered he. 'Mayst thou indeed be happy,' exclaimed she, 'and happy be thy days! Thou deservest not torture and blows, and I see thou hast been unjustly entreated.' And she comforted him with kind words and loosed his bonds. Then she questioned him of the faith of Islam, and he told her that it was the true and orthodox faith and that our lord Mohammed had approved himself by surpassing miracles and manifest signs and that the [worship of] fire was not profitable, but harmful; and he went on to expound to her the tenets of Islam, till she was persuaded and the love of the True Faith entered her heart. Then (for God the Most High had filled her with love of Asaad), she made profession of the faith and became of the people of felicity. After this, she brought him meat and drink and talked with him and they prayed together: moreover, she made him chicken-broths and fed him therewith, till he regained strength and his sickness left him and he was restored to health. One day, as she stood at the door of the house, she heard the crier proclaiming aloud and saying, 'Whoso hath with him a handsome young man, whose favour is thus and thus, and bringeth him forth, shall have all he seeketh of wealth; but if any have him and discover it not, he shall be hanged over his own door and his goods shall be confiscated and his blood go for nought.' Now Asaad had acquainted her with his whole history: so, when she heard the crier, she knew that it was he who was sought for and going down to him, told him the news. Then she went forth with him to the palace of the Vizier, whom when Asaad saw, he exclaimed, 'By

<sup>1</sup> Most happy.



Allah, this is my brother Amjed !' And threw himself upon him ; whereupon Amjed also knew him and they embraced each other and lay awhile insensible, whilst the Vizier's officers stood round them. When they came to themselves, Amjed took his brother and carried him to the Sultan, to whom he related the whole story, and the Sultan charged him to plunder Behram's house and take himself. So Amjed despatched thither a company of men, who sacked the house and took Behram and brought his daughter to the Vizier, who received her with all honour, for Asaad had told his brother all the torments he had suffered and the kindness that she had done him. Moreover, Amjed, in his turn, related to Asaad all that had passed between the lady and himself and how he had escaped hanging and become Vizier ; and they made moan, each to the other, of the anguish they had suffered for separation. Then the Sultan sent for Behram and bade strike off his head ; but he said, ' O most mighty King, art thou indeed resolved to put me to death ? ' ' Yes,' replied the King, ' except thou save thyself by becoming a Muslim.' And Behram said, ' O King, have patience with me a little.' Then he bowed his head awhile and presently raising it again, made profession of the faith and avowed himself a Muslim at the hands of the Sultan. They all rejoiced at his conversion and Amjed and Asaad told him all that had befallen them, whereat he wondered and said, ' O my lords, make ready for the journey and I will depart with you and carry you back to your father's court in a ship.' At this they rejoiced and wept sore ; but he said, ' O my lords, weep not for your departure, for ye shall be re-united [with those you love], even as were Nimeh and Num.' ' And what befell Nimeh and Num ? ' asked they. ' It is told,' replied Behram, ' (but God alone is all-knowing), that

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## STORY OF NIMEH BEN ER REBYA AND NUM HIS SLAVE-GIRL.

There lived once in the city of Cufa a man called Er Rebya ben Hatim, who was one of the chief men of the town, rich in goods and prosperous, and God had vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Nimet Allah.<sup>1</sup> One day, being in the slave-dealers' mart, he saw a female slave exposed for sale, with a little girl of wonderful beauty and grace in her hand. So he beckoned to the broker and said to him, "What is the price of this woman and her child?" "Fifty dinars," answered he. "Write the contract of sale," said Er Rebya, "and take the money and give it to her owner." Then he gave the broker the price and his brokerage and taking the woman and her child, carried them to his house. When his wife saw the slave, she said to her husband (who was the son of her father's brother), "O my cousin, what is this damsel?" Quoth he, "I bought her for the sake of the little one on her arm, for know that, when she grows up, there will not be her like for beauty, either in the land of the Arabs or elsewhere." "It was well seen of thee," answered his wife. Then said she to the woman, "What is thy name?" "O my lady," replied she, "my name is Taufic." "And what is thy daughter's name?" asked she. "Saad,"<sup>2</sup> answered the slave. "Thou sayst sooth," rejoined her mistress. "Thou art indeed happy, and happy is he who hath bought thee." Then said she to her husband, "O my cousin, what wilt thou call her?" "What thou choosest," answered he. "Then let us call her Num,"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The gift of God. The *h* in Nimeh becomes *t* before a vowel.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* happiness.

<sup>3</sup> *Num* is synonymous with *Saad*. The purpose of the change of name was to make the little one's name correspond with that of Nimeh, which is derived from the same root.

quoth she, and he said, "Good." The little Num was reared with Er Rebya's son Nimeh in one cradle and each grew up handsomer than the other. They were wont to call each other brother and sister, till they came to the age of ten, when Er Rebya said to Nimeh, "O my son, Num is not thy sister, but thy slave. I bought her in thy name, whilst thou wast yet in the cradle; so call her no more 'sister' from this day forth." "If that be so," quoth Nimeh, "I will take her to wife." Then he went to his mother and told her of this, and she said to him, "O my son, she is thy handmaid." So he went in to Num and loved her and two years passed over them, whilst Num grew up, nor was there in all Cufa a fairer or sweeter or more graceful girl than she. She learnt the Koran and all manner of knowledge and excelled in music and singing and playing upon all kinds of instruments, so that she surpassed all the folk of her time. One day, as she sat with her husband in the wine-chamber, she took the lute and tuning it, sang the following verses:

Since thou'rt my lord, by whose good grace I live in fair estate, A sword  
 wherewith I smite in twain the neck of adverse fate,  
 No need is mine to have recourse to Amr<sup>1</sup> or to Zeid,<sup>1</sup> Nor any but  
 thyself, an if the ways on me grow strait.

Nimeh was charmed with these verses and said to her, "I conjure thee, by my life, O Num, sing to us with the tambourine and other instruments!" So she sang the following verses to a lively air:

By him whose hand possesses the reins of my affair, On passion's score,  
 I swear it, my enviers I'll dare.  
 Yea, I will vex my censors and thee alone obey And sleep and ease and  
 solace, for thy sweet sake, forswear  
 And dig midmost my entrails, to hold the love of thee, A grave, of  
 which not even my heart shall be aware.

And Nimeh exclaimed, "Gifted of God art thou, O Num!"

<sup>1</sup> i.e. to any one, as we should say. "to Tom, Dick or Harry."

But whilst they led thus the most delightful life, El Hejjaj,<sup>1</sup> [the governor of Cufa, heard of Num and] said in himself, "Needs must I make shift to take this girl Num and send her to the Commander of the Faithful Abdulmelik ben Merwan, for he hath not in his palace her like for beauty and sweet singing." Then, calling an old woman, one of his body-servants, he said to her, "Go to Er Rebya's house and foregather with the girl Num and cast about to steal her away, for her like is not to be found on the face of the earth." She promised to do his bidding; so next morning she donned clothes of wool<sup>2</sup> and threw round her neck a rosary of thousands of beads; then, taking in her hand a staff and water-bottle of Yemen **Night** make, went forth, exclaiming, "Glory be to God! Praised ~~xxxxx~~ be God! There is no god but God! God is most great! There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" Nor did she leave making devout ejaculations, whilst her heart was full of craft and fraud, till she came to Nimeh's house, at the hour of noonday-prayer, and knocked at the door. The doorkeeper opened and said to her, "What dost thou want?" Quoth she, "I am a poor pious woman, whom the time of noonday-prayer hath overtaken, and I would fain pray in this blessed place." "O old woman," answered the porter, "this is no mosque nor oratory, but the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya." "I know there is neither mosque nor oratory like the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya," rejoined

<sup>1</sup> El Hejjaj ben Yousuf eth Thekefi, a famous statesman and soldier of the seventh and eighth centuries. He was governor of Chaldæa under the fifth and sixth Ommiade Khalifs and was renowned for his cruelty; but appears nevertheless to have been a prudent and capable administrator, who probably used no more rigour than was necessary to restrain the proverbially turbulent populations of Bassora and Cufa. Most of the anecdotes of his brutality and tyranny, some of which will be found in this collection, are, in all probability, apocryphal.

<sup>2</sup> Wool is the distinctive wear of Oriental devotees.



she. "I am a chamberwoman of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful and am come out upon a pilgrimage of devotion." But the porter replied, "Thou canst not enter;" and many words passed between them, till at last she caught hold of him, saying, "Shall the like of me, who have free access to the houses of Amirs and grandees, be denied admission to the house of Nimeh ben er Rebya?" Presently, out came Nimeh and hearing their dispute, laughed and bade the old woman enter. So she followed him into the presence of Num, whom she saluted after the goodliest fashion; and when she looked on her, she was confounded at her exceeding beauty and said to her, "O my lady, I commend thee to the safeguard of God, who made thee and thy lord to accord in beauty and grace!" Then she stood up in the prayer-niche and betook herself to inclination and prostration and prayer, till the day departed and the night came with the darkness, when Num said to her, "O my mother, rest thy feet awhile." "O my lady," answered the old woman, "whoso seeketh the world to come must weary himself in this world, and whoso wearieeth not himself in this world shall not attain the dwellings of the just in the world to come." Then Num brought her food and said to her, "O my mother, eat of my victual and pray that God may relent towards me and have mercy on me." But she replied, "O my lady, I am fasting. As for thee, thou art but a girl and it befits thee to eat and drink and make merry. May God be indulgent to thee! Quoth the Most High, '(None shall be saved) except those that repent and believe and work the works of righteousness.'"<sup>1</sup> Num sat awhile, conversing with the old woman, and presently said to Nimeh, "O my lord, conjure this old woman to sojourn with us awhile, for piety is imprinted on her face." Quoth he, "Set apart for her a chamber,

<sup>1</sup> *Koran* xxv. 70.

where she may do her devotions, and let none go in to her: peradventure God (glorified and exalted be He!) shall prosper us by the blessing of her presence and part us not." The old woman passed the night in prayer and recitation,<sup>1</sup> till daybreak, when she went in to Nimeh and Num and giving them good morning, said to them, "I pray God to have you in His holy keeping!" "Whither away, O my mother?" said Num. "My lord hath bidden me set apart for thee a chamber, where thou mayst retire for thy devotions." "God give him long life," replied the old woman, "and continue His favour to you both! I would have you charge the doorkeeper not to stay my coming in to you, and (God willing) I will go the round of the Holy Places and pray for you at the end of my devotions every day and night." Then she went out (whilst Num wept for parting with her, knowing not the purpose of her coming) and returned to El Hejjaj, who said to her, "What news?" She answered, "I have seen the girl, and indeed never bore woman of her day a lovelier than she." And El Hejjaj said to her, "So thou do my bidding, thou shalt have of me abundant good." Quoth she, "I ask of thee a month's time." And he replied, "It is well." Then she fell to paying frequent visits to Nimeh and Num, who redoubled in honour and kindness to her, and she used to go in to them morning and evening, and all in the house welcomed her, till, one day, being alone with Num, she said to her, "By Allah, O my lady, when I go to the Holy Places, I will pray for thee; but I should love thee to go thither with me, that thou mightest look on the Elders of the Faith that resort thither, and they should pray for thee, according to thy desire." "O my mother," said Num, "I conjure thee by Allah, take me with thee!" "Ask leave of thy mother-in-law," replied the old woman, "and I will take thee." So Num

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<sup>1</sup> Of the Koran.

said to her mother-in-law, "O my lady, ask my master to let us go, thee and me, one day, with this my old mother, to pray and worship with the fakirs in the Holy Places." Presently, Nimeh came in and sat down, whereupon the old woman went up to him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade her; so she called down blessings on him and left the house. Next day, she came again, in the absence of Nimeh, and said to Num, "We prayed for thee yesterday; but arise now and divert thyself and return ere thy lord come home." So Num said to her mother-in-law, "I beseech thee, for God's sake, let me go with this pious woman, that I may look upon the friends of God in the Holy Places and return speedily, ere my lord come." Quoth Nimeh's mother, "I fear lest thy lord know." "By Allah," said the old woman, "I will not let her sit down; but she shall look, standing on her feet, and not tarry." So on this wise she took the damsel by guile and carrying her to El Hejjaj's palace, bestowed her in a privy chamber and told him of her coming; whereupon he went in to her and looking upon her, saw her to be the loveliest of the people of the day, never had he beheld her like. When Num saw him, she veiled her face from him; but he left her not till he had called his chamberlain, whom he commanded to take fifty horsemen and mounting the damsel on a swift dromedary, carry her to Damascus and there deliver her to the Commander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan. Moreover, he gave him a letter for the Khalif, saying, "Bear him this letter and bring me his answer in all haste." So the chamberlain took the damsel, all tearful for separation from her lord, and setting out with her for Syria, gave not over journeying till he reached Damascus and sought an audience of the Commander of the Faithful, to whom he delivered the damsel and the letter. The Khalif appointed her a separate apartment and going into his harem, said to his wife,



"El Hejjaj has bought me a female slave of the daughters  
 (descendants) of the (ancient) Kings of Cufa, for ten  
 thousand dinars, and has sent her to me with this letter." **Night**  
 "May God increase thee of his favour!" answered she. **xxx.**  
 Then the Khalif's sister went into Num and when she  
 saw her, she said, "By Allah, happy the man who hath  
 thee in his house, were thy cost a hundred thousand  
 dinars!" "O fair-faced one," said Num, "what King's  
 palace is this?" "This is the city of Damascus," answered  
 the princess, "and the palace of my brother, the Com-  
 mander of the Faithful, Abdulmelik ben Merwan. Didst  
 thou not know this?" "By Allah, O my lady," said Num,  
 "I had no knowledge of this!" "And he who sold thee  
 and took thy price," asked the princess, "did he not tell  
 thee that the Khalif had bought thee?" When Num  
 heard this, she wept and said in herself, "I have been  
 cozened; but, if I speak, none will credit me; so I will  
 hold my peace and take patience, knowing that the relief  
 of God is near." Then she bent her head for shame, and  
 indeed her cheeks were tanned with the journey and the  
 sun. So the Khalif's sister left her that day and returned  
 to her on the morrow with clothes and necklaces of jewels  
 and dressed her; after which the Khalif came in to her  
 and sat down by her side, and his sister said to him,  
 "Look on this damsel, in whom God hath united every  
 perfection of beauty and grace." So he said to Num,  
 "Draw back the veil from thy face;" but she would not  
 unveil, and he beheld not her face. However, he saw her  
 wrists and love of her entered his heart; and he said to  
 his sister, "I will not go in to her for three days, till she  
 be cheered by thy converse." Then he left her, but Num  
 ceased not to brood over her case and sigh for her separa-  
 tion from Nimeh, till, at eventide, she fell sick of a fever  
 and ate not nor drank; and her face grew pale and her  
 charms faded. They told the Khalif of this, and it grieved



him ; so he visited her with physicians and men of skill, but none could come at a cure for her.

As for Nimeh, when he returned home, he sat down on his bed and cried, "Ho, Num!" But she answered not ; so he rose in haste and called out, but none came to him, for all the women in the house had hidden themselves, for fear of him. Then he went in to his mother, whom he found sitting with her cheek on her hand, and said to her, "O my mother, where is Num?" "O my son," answered she, "she is with one who is worthier than I to be trusted with her, namely, the devout old woman ; she went forth with her to visit the fakirs and return." "Since when has this been her wont," asked Nimeh, "and at what hour went she forth?" Quoth his mother, "She went out early in the morning." "And how camest thou to give her leave for this?" said he, and she replied, "O my son, it was she persuaded me." "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" exclaimed Nimeh and going forth, in a state of distraction, repaired to the chief of the police, to whom said he, "Dost thou practise on me and steal my slave-girl away from me? I will assuredly complain of thee to the Commander of the Faithful." "Who has taken her?" asked the chief of the police, and Nimeh answered, "An old woman of such and such a favour, clad in woollen raiment and carrying a rosary of thousands of beads." "Find me the old woman," rejoined the other, "and I will get thee back thy slave-girl." "Who knows the old woman?" said Nimeh. "And who knows the hidden things save God, may He be glorified and exalted?" replied the official, who knew her for El Hejjaj's agent. Quoth Nimeh, "I look to thee for my slave-girl, and El Hejjaj shall judge between thee and me." And the master of police answered, "Go to whom thou wilt." Now Nimeh's father was one of the chief men of Cufa ; so he went to the

palace of the governor, whose chamberlain went in to him and told him what was to do. El Hejjaj bade admit him and enquired his business. Quoth Nimeh, "Such and such things have befallen me." And the governor said, "Bring me the chief of the police, and we will bid him seek for the old woman." Now he knew that the chief of the police knew her; so, when he came, he said to him, "I wish thee to make search for the slave-girl of Nimeh ben er Rebya." And he answered, "None knoweth the hidden things save God the Most High." "Thou must send out horsemen," rejoined El Hejjaj, "and look for the damsel in all the roads and towns." Then he turned to Nimeh and said to him, "An thy slave-girl return not, I will give thee ten slave-girls from my house and ten from that of the chief of the police." And he said to the latter, "Go and seek for the girl." So he went out and Nimeh returned home, full of trouble and despairing of life. He had now reached the age of fourteen and there was yet no hair on his cheeks. He shut himself up from his household and ceased not to weep and lament, he and his mother, till the morning, when his father came in to him and said, "O my son, El Hejjaj hath put a cheat on the damsel and stolen her away; but from hour to hour God giveth relief." But grief redoubled on Nimeh, so that he knew not what he said nor who came in to him, and indeed his charms were changed and he was in sorry case. In this plight he abode three months, till his father despaired of him, and the physicians visited him and said, "There is no cure for him but the damsel." One day, Er Rebya heard tell of a skillful Persian physician, whom the folk gave out for accomplished in medicine and astrology and geomancy. So he sent for him and seating him by his side, entreated him with honour and said to him, "Look into my son's case." So he said to Nimeh, "Give me thy hand." Accordingly, the young man gave him his

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ccxli.

hand and he felt his pulse and his joints and looked in his face; then he laughed and turning to Er Rebya, said, "Thy son's only ailment is in his heart." "Thou sayst sooth, O sage," answered Er Rebya; "but apply thy skill to the consideration of his state and case and acquaint me with the whole thereof and hide nought from me." Quoth the Persian, "He is enamoured of a girl, who is either in Bassora or Damascus; and there is no cure for him but reunion with her." "An thou bring them together," said Er Rebya, "thou shalt have of me what will rejoice thee and shalt live all thy life in wealth and delight." "This is an easy matter," answered the Persian, "and soon brought about;" and he turned to Nimeh and said to him, "Fear not; no hurt shall befall thee; so take heart and be of good cheer." Then said he to Er Rebya, "Give me four thousand dinars of your money." So he gave them to him, and he said, "I wish to carry thy son with me to Damascus, and God willing, we will not return thence but with the damsel." Then said he to the youth, "What is thy name?" And he answered, "Nimeh." "O Nimeh," said the Persian, "sit up and be of good heart, for God will reunite thee with the damsel. So put thy trust in Him and eat and drink and be cheerful and fortify thyself for travel, for we set out for Damascus this very day." So he sat up whilst the Persian made his preparations and took of Er Rebya, in all, the sum of ten thousand dinars, together with horses and camels and beasts of burden such as he needed for the journey. Then Nimeh took leave of his father and mother and journeyed with the physician to Aleppo. They could get no news of Num there, so fared on to Damascus, where they abode three days, after which the Persian took a shop and adorned its shelves with gilding and stuffs of price and stocked them with vessels of costly porcelain, with covers of silver. Moreover, he set before himself vases and flagons of glass full of all manner

ointments and syrups, surrounded by cups of crystal, and donning a physician's habit, took his seat in the shop, with his astrolabe and geomantic tablet before him. Then he clad Nimeh in a shirt and gown of silk and girding his middle with a silken kerchief embroidered with gold, made him sit before himself, saying to him, "O Nimeh, henceforth thou art my son; so call me nought but father and I will call thee son." And he replied, "I hear and obey." The people of Damascus flocked to gaze on the youth's goodliness and the beauty of the shop and its contents, whilst the physician spoke to Nimeh in Persian and he answered him in the same tongue, for he knew the language, after the wont of the sons of the notables. The Persian soon became known among the townsfolk and they began to resort to him and acquaint him with their ailments, for which he prescribed. Moreover, they brought him the water of the sick in phials, and he would examine it and say, "He, whose water this is, is suffering from such and such a disease." And the patient would say, "Verily, this physician says sooth." So he continued to do the occasions of the folk and they to flock to him, till his fame spread throughout the city and into the houses of the great. One day, as he sat in his shop, there came up an old woman riding on an ass with housings of brocade, embroidered with jewels, and drawing bridle before his shop, beckoned to him, saying, "Take my hand." So he took her hand, and she alighted and said to him, "Art thou the Persian physician from Irak?" "Yes," answered he, and she said, "Know that I have a sick daughter." Then she brought out to him a phial and he looked at it and said to her, "Tell me thy daughter's name, that I may calculate her horoscope and learn the hour in which it will befit her to take medicine." "O brother of the Persians," Night answered she, "her name is Num." When he heard this, ccxlii. he fell to calculating and writing on his hand and presently



said to her, "O my lady, I cannot prescribe for the girl, till I know what countrywoman she is, because of the difference of climate: so tell me where she was brought up and what is her age." "She is fourteen years old," replied the old woman, "and was brought up in Cufa of Irak." "And how long," asked he, "has she sojourned in this country?" "But a few months," answered she. When Nimeh heard the old woman's words and the name of his slave-girl, his heart fluttered and he was like to swoon. Then said the Persian to the old woman, "Such and such medicines will suit her case;" and she rejoined, "Then make them up and give them to me, with the blessing of God the Most High!" So saying, she threw him ten dinars, and he bade Nimeh prepare the necessary drugs; whereupon she looked at the youth and exclaimed, "God have thee in His holy keeping, O my son! Verily, she is like thee in age and favour." Then said she to the physician, "O brother of the Persians, is this thy slave or thy son?" "He is my son," answered he. So Nimeh made up the medicine and laying it in a little box, took a piece of paper and wrote thereon the following verses:

So Num but vouchsafe me a glance, to gladden my heart and my mind,  
 Let Suada unfavouring prove and JumI, an't please her, unkind.<sup>1</sup>  
 "Forget her," quoth they unto me, "And thou shalt have twenty like  
 her." I will not forget her, I swear, for never her like should I find.

He put the paper in the box and sealing it up, wrote on the cover the following words in the Cufic character, "I am Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa." Then he gave it to the old woman, who bade them farewell and returning to the Khalif's palace, went in to Num, to whom she delivered

<sup>1</sup> This verse contains a series of jeux-de-mots, founded upon the collocation of the three proper names, Num, Suada and JumI, with the third person feminine singular, preterite-present, fourth conjugation, of their respective verb-roots, i.e. *idha anamet Num*, if Num vouchsafe, etc., etc.

the box, saying, "O my lady, know that there is lately come to our town a Persian physician, than whom I never saw a more skilful nor a better versed in matters of sickness. I showed him the phial and told him thy name, and he knew thine ailment and prescribed a remedy. Then, by his order, his son made thee up this medicine; and there is not in Damascus a comelier or more elegant youth than this son of his nor hath any the like of his shop." Num took the box and seeing the names of her lord and his father written thereon, changed colour and said to herself, "Doubtless, the owner of this shop is come in search of me." So she said to the old woman, "Describe this youth to me." "His name is Nimch," answered the old woman; "he is richly clad and perfectly handsome and has a mole on his right eyebrow." "Give me the medicine," cried Num, "and may the blessing and help of God the Most High attend it!" So she drank off the potion and said, laughing, "Indeed, it is a blessed medicine." Then she sought in the box and finding the paper, read it and knew that this was indeed her lord, whereat her heart was solaced and she rejoiced. When the old woman saw her laughing, she exclaimed, "This is indeed a blessed day!" And Num said, "O nurse, I have a mind to eat and drink." So the old woman said to the serving-women, "Bring a tray of dainty viands for your mistress;" whereupon they set food before her and she sat down to eat. Presently, in came the Khalif and seeing her sitting eating, rejoiced; and the old woman said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I give thee joy of thy slave's recovery! Know that there is lately come to our city a physician, than whom I never saw a better versed in diseases and their cure. I fetched her medicine from him and she has taken of it but once and is restored to health." Quoth he, "Take a thousand dinars and provide for her treatment, till she be completely recovered."

And he went away, rejoicing in the damsel's recovery, whilst the old woman betook herself to the physician, to whom she delivered the thousand dinars and a letter that Num had written, giving him to know that she was become the Khalif's slave. He gave the letter to Nimeh, who knew her hand and fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he opened the letter and found these words written therein: "From the slave despoiled of her delight,<sup>1</sup> her whose reason hath been beguiled and who is separated from the beloved of her heart. Thy letter hath reached me and hath dilated my bosom and rejoiced my heart, even as saith the poet :

The letter reached me, never may the fingers fail thee aught, That traced its characters, until with sweetest scent they're fraught !

'Twas as unto his mother's arms when Moses was restored Or as to blind old Jacob's hands when Joseph's coat was brought."<sup>2</sup>

When he read these verses, his eyes ran over with tears and the old woman said to him, "What ails thee to weep, O my son? May God never make thine eye to shed tears!" "O my lady," answered the Persian, "how should my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa? Indeed, her recovery depends on her seeing him, for nought ails her but the love of him. So, O my lady, take these thousand dinars to thyself (and thou shalt have of me yet more than this) and look on us with eyes of compassion; for we know not how to bring this affair to a happy issue but through thee." Then she said to Nimeh, "Art thou indeed her lord?"

<sup>1</sup> *Nimeh.*

<sup>2</sup> "And he (Jacob) turned from them, saying, 'Woe is me for Joseph!' And his eyes grew white for grief . . . . (Quoth Joseph to his brethren) 'Take this my shirt and throw it over my father's face and he will recover his sight' . . . . So, when the messenger of glad tidings came (to Jacob), he threw it the shirt) over his face and he was restored to sight." —*Koran* xii. 84, 93, 96.

"Yes," answered he, and she, "Thou sayst truly; for she ceases not to name thee." Then he told her all that had passed from first to last, and she said, "O youth, thou shalt owe thy reunion with her to none but me." So she mounted at once and returning to Num, looked in her face and smiled, saying, "O my daughter, it is just that thou weep and fall sick for thy separation from thy master Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa." Quoth Num, "Verily, the veil has been withdrawn for thee and the truth revealed to thee." "Be of good cheer," rejoined the old woman, "and take heart, for I will surely bring you together, though it cost me my life." Then she returned to Nimeh and said to him, "I have seen thy slave-girl and find that she longs for thee yet more than thou for her; for the Commander of the Faithful is minded to foregather with her, but she refuses herself to him. But if thou be stout of heart and firm of courage, I will bring you together and venture myself for you and make shift to bring thee to her in the Khalif's palace; for she cannot come forth." And Nimeh answered, "God requite thee with good!" Then she went back to Num and said to her, "Thy lord is indeed dying of love for thee and would fain see thee and foregather with thee. What sayst thou?" "And I also," answered Num, "am dying for his sight." So the old woman took a parcel of women's clothes and ornaments and repairing to Nimeh, said to him, "Come apart with me into a privy place." So he brought her into the room behind the shop, where she painted him and decked his wrists and plaited his hair, after which she clad him in a slave-girl's habit and adorned him after the fairest fashion of woman's adornment, till he was as one of the houris of Paradise; and when she saw him thus, she exclaimed, "Blessed be God, the most excellent Creator! By Allah, thou art handsomer than the damsel! Now, walk with thy left shoulder forward and swing thy buttocks." So



he walked before her, as she bade him; and when she saw he had caught the trick of women's gait, she said to him, "Expect me to-morrow night, when, God willing, I will come and carry thee to the palace. When thou seest the chamberlains and the eunuchs, fear not, but bow thy head and speak not with any, for I will ward thee from their speech; and with God is success." Accordingly, on the morrow she returned at the appointed hour and carrying him to the palace, entered and he after her. The chamberlain would have stayed him, but the old woman said to him, "O most ill-omened of slaves, this is the handmaid of Num, the Khalif's favourite. How darest thou stay her?" Then said she, "Enter, O damsel!" And they went on, till they drew near the door leading to the inner court of the palace, when the old woman said to him, "O Nimeh, take courage and enter and turn to the left. Count five doors and enter the sixth, for it is that of the place prepared for thee. Fear nothing, and if any speak to thee, answer not neither stop." Then she went up with him to the door, and the chamberlain on guard hailed her, saying, "What damsel is that?" Quoth the old woman, "Our lady hath a mind to buy her." And he said, "None may enter save by leave of the Commander of the Faithful; so go thou back with her. I cannot let her pass, for thus am I commanded." "O chief chamberlain," replied the old woman, "use thy reason. Thou knowest that Num, the Khalif's slave-girl, of whom he is enamoured, is but now restored to health and the Commander of the Faithful hardly yet credits her recovery. Now she is minded to buy this girl; so oppose thou not her entrance, lest it come to Num's knowledge and she be wroth with thee and suffer a relapse and this bring thy head to be cut off." Then said she to Nimeh, "Enter, O damsel; pay no heed to what he says and tell not the princess that he opposed

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thine entrance." So Nimeh bowed his head and entered, but mistook and turned to his right, instead of his left, and meaning to count five doors and enter the sixth, counted six and entering the seventh, found himself in a place carpeted with brocade and hung with curtains of gold-embroidered silk. Here and there stood censers of aloes-wood and ambergris and sweet-scented musk, and at the upper end was a couch covered with brocade, on which he seated himself, marvelling at the exceeding magnificence of the place and knowing not what was appointed to him in the secret purpose of God. As he sat musing on his case, the Khalif's sister entered, followed by her handmaid, and seeing him seated there, took him for a slave-girl and said to him, "What art thou, O damsel, and who brought thee hither?" He made no reply and she continued, "If thou be one of my brother's favourites and he be wroth with thee, I will intercede with him for thee." But he answered her not a word; so she said to her maid, "Stand at the door and let none enter." Then she went up to Nimeh and looking at him, was amazed at his beauty and said to him, "O lady, tell me who thou art and how thou camest here; for I have never seen thee in the palace." Still he answered not, whereat she was angered and putting her hand to his bosom, found no breasts and would have unveiled him, that she might know who he was; but he said to her, "O my lady, I am thy slave and cast myself on thy protection; do thou protect me." "No harm shall come to thee," said she; "but tell me who thou art and who brought thee into this my lodging." "O princess," answered he, "I am known as Nimeh ben er Rebya of Cufa, and I have ventured my life for my slave-girl Num, whom El Hejjaj took by sleight and sent hither." "Fear not," rejoined the princess; "no harm shall befall thee." Then, calling her maid, she said to her, "Go to Num's chamber and bid her to me."

Meanwhile, the old woman went to Num's bed-chamber and said to her, "Has thy lord come to thee?" "No, by Allah!" answered Num, and the other said, "Belike he hath gone astray and entered some chamber other than thine." "There is no power and no virtue but in God the Most High, the Supreme!" exclaimed Num. "Our last hour is come and we are all lost." As they sat, pondering, in came the princess's maid and saluting Num, said to her, "My lady bids thee to her entertainment." "I hear and obey," answered the damsel, and the old woman said, "Belike thy lord is with the Khalif's sister and the veil has been done away." So Num rose and betook herself to the princess, who said to her, "Here is thy lord sitting with me; it seems he has gone astray; but, please God, neither thou nor he has any cause for fear." When Num rose to meet her, she took heart and went up to Nimeh, who

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At this they both rejoiced, and Num, calling for a lute, tuned it and preluded enchantingly, then sang the following verses :

Whenas, content with nothing less, the spies our sev'rance sought, Allbe  
no debt of blood they had 'gainst me or thee in aught,  
Whenas they poured upon our ears the hurtling din of war, Whilst  
helpers and protectors failed and succour came there nought,  
I fought the railers with my tears, my spirit and thine eyes ; Yea, with  
the torrent, fire and sword, to fend them off I wrought.

Then she gave the lute to Nimeh, saying, "Sing thou to us." So he took it and playing a lively measure, sang these verses :

The moon were like thee at its full, were it of freckles free, And did it  
never brook eclipse, the sun would favour thee.  
Indeed, I marvel, (but in love how many a marvel is ! Therein are  
passion and desire and cares and ecstasy,)  
Short seems the distance, when I fare towards my love's abode ; But  
when I journey from her sight, the way is long to me.

When he had made an end of his song, Num filled the cup and gave it to him, and he drank it off ; then she filled again and gave the cup to the princess, who took it and emptied it ; after which she in her turn took the lute and sang as follows :

Mourning and grief possess my heart and in my breast The ardour of  
desire abideth as a guest.  
The wasting of my frame, alas ! is manifest And all my soul is sick with  
passion and unrest.

Then she filled the cup and gave it to Num, who drank it off and taking the lute, sang the following verses :

O thou, upon whom I bestowed my soul and thou rack'dst it to death  
And I would have ta'en it again, but could not release it i' faith,  
Relent to a lover forlorn ; vouchsafe him, I pray, ere he die, What may  
from perdition redeem, for this is the last of his breath.

They ceased not to sing and make merry and drink to the sweet sound of the strings, full of mirth and joyance and good cheer, till, behold, in came the Commander of



the Faithful. When they saw him, they rose and kissed the ground before him ; and he, seeing Num with the lute in her hand, said to her, "O Num, praised be God who hath done away from thee pain and affliction!" Then he looked at Nimeh (who was still disguised as a woman) and said to the princess, "O my sister, what damsel is this by Num's side?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered she, "she is one of thy slave-girls and the bosom friend of Num, who will neither eat nor drink without her." And she repeated the words of the poet :

Two opposites, dissevered still in charms and straitly knit, And each one's beauty brightlier shows against its opposite.

"By the Great God," said the Khalif, "she is as handsome as Num, and to-morrow, I will appoint her a separate chamber beside that of Num and send her furniture and linen and all that befits her, in honour of Num." Then the princess called for food and set it before her brother, who ate and filling a cup, signed to Num to sing. So she took the lute, after drinking two cups, and sang the following verses :

Whenas my cup-companion hath poured me out of wine Three foaming cups, brimmed over with nectar from the vine,  
I trail my skirts in glory all night, as if o'er thee, Commander of the Faithful, the empery were mine.

The Khalif was delighted and filling another cup, gave it to Num and bade her sing again. So she drank off the cup, and sweeping the strings of the lute, sang as follows :

O thou, the noblest man of men that live in this our day, Whose equal none may boast himself in power and mightiness,  
O all unpeered in pride of place, to whom munificence Is as a birth-right, Lord and King, whom all in all confess,  
Thou, that dost lord it, sovran-wise, o'er all the kings of earth And without grudging or reproach, giv'st bountiful largesse,  
God have thee ever in His guard, despite thine every foe, And be thy fortune ever bright with victory and success !

When the Khalif heard this, he exclaimed, "By Allah, it is good! By Allah, it is excellent! Verily, God hath been good to thee, O Num! How sweet is thy voice and how clear thy speech!" They passed the time thus in mirth and good cheer, till midnight, when the Khalif's sister said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, give ear to a tale I have read in books of a certain man of rank." "And what is this tale?" asked he. "Know," said she, "that there lived once in the city of Cufa, a youth called Nimeh ben er Rebya, and he had a slave-girl whom he loved and who loved him. They had been reared in one bed; but when they grew up and mutual love took possession of them, fate smote them with its calamities and decreed separation unto them. For designing folk enticed her by sleight forth of his house and stealing her away from him, sold her to one of the Kings for ten thousand dinars. Now the girl loved her lord even as he loved her; so he left house and home and fortune and setting out in quest of her, made shift, at the peril of his life, to gain access to her; but they had not been long in company, when in came the King, who had bought her of her ravisher, and hastily bade put them to death, without waiting to enquire into the matter, as was just. What sayest thou, O Commander of the Faithful, of this King's conduct?" "This was indeed a strange thing," answered the Khalif; "it behoved the King to use his power with clemency, and he should have considered three things in their favour; first, that they loved one another; secondly, that they were in his house and under his hand; and thirdly, that it behoves a King to be deliberate in judging between the folk, and how much more so when he himself is concerned! Wherefore the King in this did unkingly." Then said his sister, "O my brother by the Lord of heaven and earth, I conjure thee, bid Num sing and give ear to that she shall sing!" And he said, "O Num, sing

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to me." So she played a lively measure and sang the following verses :

Fortune hath played the traitor ; indeed, 'twas ever so, Transpiercing  
 hearts and bosoms and kindling care and woe  
 And parting friends in sunder, that were in union knit, So down their  
 cheeks thou seest the tears in torrents flow.  
 They were, and I was with them, in all delight of life, And fortune did  
 unite us full straitly whiles ago.  
 So gouts of blood, commingled with tears, both night and day I'll weep,  
 my sore affliction for loss of thee to show.

When he heard this, he was moved to great delight, and his sister said to him, "O my brother, he who decideth in aught against himself, it behoveth him to abide by it and do according to his word ; and thou hast by this judgment decided against thyself." Then said she, "O Nimeh, stand up, and do thou likewise, O Num !" So they stood up and she continued, "O Commander of the Faithful, she who stands before thee is Num, whom El Hejjaj ben Yousuf eth Thekefi stole and sent to thee, falsely pretending in his letter to thee that he had bought her for ten thousand dinars. This other is her lord, Nimeh ben er Rebya ; and I beseech thee, by the honour of thy pious forefathers and by Hemzeh and Akil and Abbas,<sup>1</sup> to pardon them and bestow them one on the other, that thou mayst earn the recompense in the next world of thy just dealing with them ; for they are under thy hand and have eaten of thy meat and drunken of thy drink ; and behold, I make intercession for them and beg of thee the boon of their lives." "Thou sayst sooth," replied the Khalif, "I did indeed give judgment as thou sayst, and I use not to go back on my word." Then said he, "O Num, is this thy lord?" And she answered, "Yes, O Commander of the

<sup>1</sup> Hemzeh and Abbas were uncles of Mohammed. The Akil here alluded to is apparently a son of the Khalif Ali, who deserted his father and joined the usurper Muawiyeh, the founder of the Ommiade dynasty.

Faithful." 'No harm shall befall you,' said he; 'I give you to one another.' Then he said to the young man, 'O Nimeh, who told thee where she was and taught thee how to get at her?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied he, 'give ear to my story; for by the virtue of thy pious forefathers, I will hide nothing from thee!' And he told him all that had passed between himself and the Persian physician and the old woman and how she had brought him into the palace and he had mistaken one door for another; whereat the Khalif wondered exceedingly and said, 'Fetch me the Persian.' So they fetched him and he made him one of his chief officers. Moreover, he bestowed on him robes of honour and ordered him a handsome present, saying, 'Him, who has shown such good sense and skill in his ordinance, it behoves us to make one of our chief officers.' He also loaded Nimeh and Num with gifts and honours and rewarded the old woman; and they abode with him in joy and content and all delight of life seven days; at the end of which time Nimeh craved leave to return to Cufa with his slave-girl. The Khalif gave leave and they departed accordingly and arrived in due course at Cufa, where Nimeh foregathered with his father and mother, and they abode in the enjoyment of all the delights and comforts of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.'

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The princes wondered mightily at Behram's story and said, 'By Allah, this is indeed a rare story!' They passed the night thus, and next morning, Amjed and Asaad mounted and riding to the palace, sought an audience of the King, who received them with honour. As they sat talking, of a sudden they heard the townsfolk crying aloud and shouting to one another and calling for help, and the chamberlain came in to the King and said to him, 'Some King hath encamped before the city, he and his army,



with arms displayed, and we know not who they are nor what they seek.' The King took counsel with his Vizier and Asaad, and Amjed said, 'I will go out to him and learn the cause of his coming.' So he took horse and riding forth the city, repaired to the stranger's camp, where he found the King and with him many soldiers and mounted officers. When the guards saw him, they knew him for an ambassador from the King of the city; so they took him and brought him to their King. Amjed kissed the ground before him; but lo, the King was a queen, who wore a chin-band over her face, and she said to Amjed, 'Know that I have no design on your city and am only come hither in quest of a beardless slave of mine, whom if I find with you, I will do you no hurt; but if I find him not, then shall there befall sore battle between you and me.' 'O Queen,' asked Amjed, 'what is thy slave's name and what like is he?' Said she, 'His name is Asaad and he is of such and such a favour. My name is Merjaneh, and this slave came to my town in company of Behram, a Magian, who refused to sell him to me; so I took him by force, but the Magian fell upon him by night and took him away by stealth.' When Amjed heard this he knew that it was his brother Asaad whom she sought and said to her, 'O Queen of the age, praised be God who hath brought us relief! Know that he whom thou seekest is my brother.' Then he told her their story and all that had befallen them in the land of exile, and acquainted her with the cause of their departure from the Islands of Ebony, whereat she marvelled and rejoiced to have found Asaad. So she bestowed a dress of honour upon Amjed, and he returned to the King and told him what had passed, at which they all rejoiced and the King and the two princes went forth to meet Queen Merjaneh. They were admitted to her presence and sat down to converse with her, but as they were thus engaged, behold,

a cloud of dust arose and grew, till it covered the landscape. Presently, it lifted and discovered an army, in numbers like the swollen sea, armed cap-a-pie, who, making for the city with naked swords, encompassed it as the ring encompasses the little finger. When Amjed and Asaad saw this, they exclaimed, 'We are God's and to Him we return. What is this great army? Doubtless, these are enemies; and except we agree with this Queen Merjaneh to resist them, they will take the town from us and slay us. There is nothing for us but to go out to them and see who they are.' So Amjed mounted and passing through Queen Merjaneh's camp, came to the approaching army and was admitted to the presence of their King, to whom he delivered his message, after kissing the earth before him. Quoth the King, 'I am called King Ghaïour, lord of the Islands and the Seas and the Seven Castles, and am come out in quest of my daughter Budour, of whom fortune hath bereft me; for she left me and returned not to me, nor have I heard any news of her or her husband Kemerezzeman. Have ye any tidings of them?' When Amjed heard this, he knew that this King was none other than his grandfather, his mother's father, and kissing the earth before him, told him that he was the son of his daughter Budour; whereupon Ghaïour threw himself upon him and they both fell a-weeping. Then said Ghaïour, 'Praised be God, O my son, for safety, since I have foregathered with thee!' And Amjed told him that his daughter Budour and her husband Kemerezzeman were well and abode in a city called the City of Ebony. Moreover, he related to him how his father, being wroth with him and his brother, had commanded his treasurer to put them to death, but that the latter had taken pity on them and let them go with their lives. Quoth King Ghaïour, 'I will go back with thee and thy brother to your father and make your peace with

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him.' Amjed kissed the ground before him and the King bestowed a dress of honour upon him, after which he returned, smiling, to the King of the city of the Magians and told him what he had learnt, at which he wondered exceedingly. Then he despatched guest-gifts of sheep and horses and camels and provender and so forth to King Ghaïour and the like to Queen Merjaneh and told her what had chanced, whereupon quoth she, 'I too will accompany you with my troops and will do my endeavour to make peace [between the princes and their father.]' At this moment, there arose another cloud of dust and spread, till it covered the prospect and darkened the day; and under it, they heard shouts and cries and neighing of horses and saw the sheen of swords and the glint of lance-points. When this new host drew near the city and saw the two other armies, they beat their drums and the King of the Magians exclaimed, 'This is indeed a blessed day! Praised be God who hath made us of accord with these two armies! If it be His will, He will give us peace with yon other also.' Then said he to Amjed and Asaad, 'Go forth and bring us news of them, for they are a mighty host, never saw I a mightier.' So they opened the city gates, which the King had shut for fear of the surrounding troops, and Amjed and Asaad went forth and coming to the new host, found that it was the army of the King of the Ebony Islands, led by their father, King Kemerezzeman in person. When they came before him, they kissed the earth and wept; but, when he saw them, he threw himself upon them, weeping sore, and strained them long to his breast. Then he excused himself to them and told them how sore desolation he had suffered for their loss; and they acquainted him with King Ghaïour's arrival, whereupon he mounted with his chief officers and proceeded to the King of China's camp, he and his sons. As they drew near, one of the princes rode forward and informed King

Ghaïour of Kemerezzeman's coming, whereupon he came out to meet him and they joined company, marvelling at these things and how Fortune had ordered their encounter in that place. Then the townsfolk made them banquets of all manner of meats and confections and brought them sheep and horses and camels and fodder and other guest-gifts and all that the troops needed. Presently, behold, yet another cloud of dust arose and spread till it covered the landscape, whilst the earth shook with the tramp of horse and the drums sounded like the storm-winds. After awhile, the dust lifted and discovered an army clad in black and armed cap-a-pie, and in their midst rode a very old man clad also in black, whose beard flowed down over his breast. When the King of the city saw this great host, he said to the other Kings, 'Praised be God the Most High, by whose leave ye are met here, all in one day, and proved all known one to the other! But what vast army is this that covers the country?' 'Have no fear of them,' answered they; 'we are here three Kings, each with a great army, and if they be enemies, we will join thee in doing battle with them, were three times their number added to them.' As they were talking, up came an envoy from the approaching host, making for the city. They brought him before the four Kings and he kissed the earth and said, 'The King my master comes from the land of the Persians; many years ago he lost his son and is seeking him in all countries. If he find him with you, well and good; but if he find him not, there will be war between him and you, and he will lay waste your city.' 'That shall he not,' rejoined Kemerezzeman; 'but how is thy master called in the land of the Persians?' 'He is called King Shehriman, lord of the Khalidan Islands,' answered the envoy; 'and he hath levied these troops in the lands traversed by him, whilst seeking his son.' When Kemerezzeman heard his father's name, he gave a great cry and fell down in a



swoon; then, presently coming to himself, he wept sore and said to Amjed and Asaad, 'Go, O my sons, with the messenger: salute your grandfather, King Shehriman, and give him glad tidings of me, for he mourns my loss and even now wears black for my sake.' Then he told the other Kings all that had befallen him in his youth, at which they all wondered and mounting with him, repaired to his father, whom he saluted, and they embraced and fell down in a swoon, for excess of joy. When they revived, Kemerezzeman acquainted his father with all his adventures, and the other Kings saluted Shehriman. Then they married Merjaneh to Asaad and sent her back to her kingdom, charging her not to leave them without news of her. Moreover, Amjed took Bustan, Behram's daughter, to wife, and they all set out for the City of Ebony. When they arrived there, Kemerezzeman went in to his father-in-law, King Armanous, and told him all that had befallen him and how he had found his sons; whereat Armanous rejoiced and gave him joy of his safe return. Then King Ghaïour went in to his daughter, Queen Budour, and satisfied his longing for her company, and they all abode a month's space in the City of Ebony; after which the

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cclix. King of China and his daughter returned to their own country with their company, taking prince Amjed with them, whom, as soon as Ghaïour was settled again in his kingdom, he made king in his stead. Moreover, Kemerezzeman made Asaad king in his room over the Ebony Islands, with the consent of his grandfather, King Armanous, and set out himself, with his father, King Shehriman, for the Islands of Khalidan. The people of the capital decorated the city in their honour and they ceased not to beat the drums for glad tidings a whole month; nor did Kemerezzeman leave to govern in his father's room, till there overtook them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies."

"O Shehrzad," said King Shehriyar, "this is indeed a right wonderful story!" "O King," answered she, "it is not more wonderful than that of Alaeddin Abou esh Shammat." "What is that?" asked he, and she said, "I have heard tell, O august King, that

### ALAEDDIN ABOU ESH SHAMAT.

There lived once in Cairo, of old time, a merchant named Shemseddin, who was of the best and truest-spoken of the traders of the city and had great store of money and goods and slaves and servants, white and black and male and female. Moreover, he was Provost of the Merchants of Cairo and had a wife, whom he loved and who loved him; but he had lived with her forty years, yet had not been blessed with son or daughter by her. One Friday, as he sat in his shop, he noted that each of the merchants had a son or two or more, sitting in shops like their fathers. Presently, he entered the bath and made the Friday ablution; after which he came out and took the barber's glass, saying, 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His Apostle!' Then he looked at his beard and seeing that the white hairs in it outnumbered the black, bethought himself that hoariness is the harbinger of death. Now his wife knew the time of his coming and had washed and made ready for him; so when he came in to her, she said, 'Good even;' but he replied, 'I see no good.' Then she called for the evening meal and said to her husband, 'Eat, O my lord.' Quoth he, 'I will eat nothing,' and pushing the table away with his foot, turned his back to her. 'Why dost thou thus?' said she. 'What has vexed thee?' And he answered, 'Thou art the cause of my vexation.' 'How Night  
so?' asked she. 'This morning,' replied he, 'when I tel.

had a son or two or more, and I said to myself, "He who took thy father will not spare thee." Now the night I wedded thee, thou madest me swear that I would never take a second wife nor a concubine, Abyssinian or Greek or other, nor would lie a night from thee: and behold, thou art barren, and swiving thee is like boring into the rock.' 'God is my witness,' rejoined she, 'that the fault lies with thee, for that thy seed is thin.' 'And how is it with him whose seed is thin?' asked he, and she, 'He cannot get women with child nor beget children.' 'What thickens seed?' asked he. 'Tell me and I will try it: haply, it will thicken mine.' Quoth she, 'Enquire for it of the druggists.' They slept that night and arose on the morrow, repenting each of having spoken angrily to the other. Then he went to the market and accosting a druggist, said to him, 'Hast thou wherewithal to thicken the seed?' 'I had it, but am spent of it,' answered the druggist; 'ask my neighbour.' So Shemseddin made the round of the bazaar, till he had asked every one; but they all laughed at him and he returned to his shop and sat down, troubled. Now there was in the market a man called Sheikh Mohammed Semsem, who was syndic of the brokers and was given to the use of opium and bang and hashish. He was poor and used to wish Shemseddin good morrow every day; so he came to him according to his wont and saluted him. The merchant returned his salute, and the other, seeing him vexed, said to him, 'O my lord, what hath crossed thee?' Quoth Shemseddin, 'These forty years have I been married to my wife, yet hath she borne me neither son nor daughter; and I am told that the cause of my failure to get her with child is the thinness of my seed; so I have been seeking wherewithal to thicken it, but found it not.' 'I have a thickener,' said Sheikh Mohammed; 'but what wilt thou say to him who makes thy wife conceive by thee, after forty years' barrenness?

'An thou do this,' answered the merchant, 'I will largely reward thee.' 'Then give me a dinar,' rejoined the broker, and Shemseddin said, 'Take these two dinars.' He took them and said, 'Give me also yonder bowl of porcelain.' So he gave it him, and the broker betook himself to a hashish-seller, of whom he bought two ounces of concentrated Turkish opium and equal parts of Chinese cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, white pepper, ginger and mountain lizard<sup>1</sup> and pounding them all together, boiled them in sweet oil; after which he added three ounces of frankincense and a cupful of coriander-seed and macerating the whole, made it into a paste with Greek honey. Then he put the electuary in the bowl and carried it to the merchant, to whom he delivered it, saying, 'This is the seed-thickener, and the manner of using it is this. Make the evening-meal off mutton and house-pigeon, plentifully seasoned and spiced; then take of this electuary with a spoon and wash it down with a draught of boiled date-wine.' So the merchant bought mutton and pigeons and sent them to his wife, bidding her dress them well and lay up the electuary till he should call for it. She did as he bade her and he ate the evening-meal, after which he called for the bowl and ate of the electuary. It liked him well, so he ate the rest and lay with his wife. That very night she conceived by him and after three months, her courses ceased and she knew that she was with child. When the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, the pangs of labour took her and they raised cries of joy. The midwife delivered her with difficulty [of a son], then, taking the new-born child, she pronounced over him the names of Mohammed and Ali and said, 'God is Most Great!' Moreover, she called in his ear the call to prayer; then swathed him and gave him to his mother, who took

<sup>1</sup> One of the numerous quack aphrodisiacs current in the middle ages, as with us cock's cullions and other grotesque prescriptions.



him and put him to her breast; and he sucked his full and slept. The midwife abode with them three days, till they had made the mothering-cakes and sweetmeats; and they distributed them on the seventh day. Then they sprinkled salt<sup>1</sup> and the merchant, going in to his wife, gave her joy of her safe delivery and said, 'Where is the gift of God?' So they brought him a babe of surpassing beauty, the handiwork of the Ever-present Orderer of all things, whoever saw him would have deemed him a yearling child, though he was but seven days old. Shemseddin looked on his face and seeing it like a shining full moon, with moles on both cheeks, said to his wife, 'What hast thou named him?' 'If it were a girl,' answered she, 'I had named her; but it is a boy, so none shall name him but thou.' Now the people of that time used to name their children by omens; and whilst the merchant and his wife were taking counsel of the name, they heard one say to his friend, 'Harkye, my lord Alaeddin!' So the merchant said, 'We will call him Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.'<sup>2</sup> Then he committed the child to the nurses, and he drank milk two years, after which they weaned him and he grew up and throve and walked upon the earth. When he came to seven years old, they put him in a chamber under the earth, for fear of the evil eye, and his father said, 'He shall not come out, till his beard grows.' And he gave him in charge to a slave-girl and a black slave; the former dressed him his meals and the latter carried them to him. Then his father circumcised him and made him a great feast; after which he brought him a doctor of the law, who taught him to write and repeat the Koran and other parts of knowledge, till he became an accomplished scholar. One day, the slave, after bringing him the tray of food, went away and forgot to shut the trap-door after him: so

<sup>1</sup> To conjure the evil eye.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* him of the moles.

Alaeddin came forth and went in to his mother, with whom was a company of women of rank. As they sat talking, in came he upon them, as he were a drunken white slave,<sup>1</sup> for the excess of his beauty; and when they saw him, they veiled their faces and said to his mother, 'God requite thee, O such an one! How canst thou let this strange slave in upon us? Knowest thou not that modesty is a point of the Faith?' 'Pronounce the name of God,' answered she. 'This is my son, the darling of my heart and the son of the Provost Shemseddin.' Quoth they, 'We never knew that thou hadst a son:' and she, 'His father feared the evil eye for him and shut him up in a chamber under the earth, nor did we mean that he should come out, before his beard was grown; but it would seem as if the slave had unawares left the door open, and he hath come out.' The women gave her joy of him, and he went out from them into the courtyard, where he seated himself in the verandah.<sup>2</sup> Presently, in came the slaves with his father's mule, and he said to them, 'Whence comes this mule?' Quoth they, 'Thy father rode her to the shop, and we have brought her back.' 'And what is my father's trade?' asked he. And they replied, 'He is Provost of the merchants of Cairo and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs.' Then he went in to his mother and said to her, 'O my mother, what is my father's trade?' Said she, 'He is a merchant and Provost of the merchants of Cairo and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs. His slaves consult him not in selling aught whose price is less than

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<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the redness of his cheeks, as if they had been flushed with wine. The passage may be construed, "As he were a white slave, with cheeks reddened by wine." The Turkish and other white slaves were celebrated for their beauty.

<sup>2</sup> As a protection against the evil eye. We may perhaps, however, read, "Ask pardon of God!" i.e. for your unjust reproach.

<sup>3</sup> See note, post, p. 299.

a thousand dinars, but sell it at their own discretion; nor doth any merchandise, little or much, enter or leave Cairo, without passing through his hands; for, O my son, God the Most Great hath given thy father wealth past count.' 'Praised be God,' exclaimed he, 'that I am son of the Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs and that my father is Provost of the merchants! But why, O my mother, did you put me in the underground chamber and leave me prisoner there?' 'O my son,' answered she, 'we did this for fear of (men's) eyes, for it is true that the evil eye hath power to harm and the most part of the sojourners in the tombs are of its victims. 'O my mother,' rejoined he, 'where is a place of refuge against destiny? Verily, taking care estoppeth not fate nor is there any escape from that which is written. He who took my grandfather will not spare myself nor my father; for, though he live to-day, he shall not live to-morrow. And when my father dies and I come forth and say, "I am Alaeddin, son of Shemseddin the merchant," none of the people will believe me, but the aged will say, "Never in our lives saw we a son or a daughter of Shemseddin." Then the Treasury will come down and take my father's estate; and may Allah have mercy on him who saith, "The noble dies and his wealth passes away and the meanest of men take his women." So do thou, O my mother, speak to my father, that he take me with him to the market and set me up in a shop with merchandise and teach me to buy and sell and give and take.' 'O my son,' answered his mother, 'when thy father returns, I will tell him this.' So when the merchant came home, he found his son sitting with his mother and said to her, 'Why hast thou brought him forth of the underground chamber?' 'O my cousin,' answered she, 'it was not I that brought him out; but the servants forgot to shut the door and left it open; so he came forth and came in to me, as I sat with a company of women of rank.' And she

went on to repeat to him what the boy had said; and Shemseddin said to the latter, 'O my son, to-morrow, God willing, I will take thee with me to the market; but I would have thee know that the commerce of the markets and the shops demands good manners and an accomplished carriage in all conditions.' So Alaeddin passed the night, rejoicing in his father's promise; and on the morrow the merchant carried him to the bath and clad him in a suit worth much money. As soon as they had broken their fast and drunken sherbets, Shemseddin mounted his mule and rode to the market, followed by his son; but when the market-folk saw their Provost making towards them, followed by a youth as he were a piece of the moon on its fourteenth night, they said, one to another, 'See yonder boy behind the Provost of the merchants. Verily, we thought well of him; but he is like the leek, grayheaded and green at the heart.' And Sheikh Mohammed Semsem before mentioned, the Deputy of the market, said, 'O merchants, never will we accept the like of him for our chief.' Now it was the custom, when the Provost came from his house and sat down in his shop of a morning, for the Deputy of the market and the rest of the merchants to go in a body to his shop and recite to him the opening chapter of the Koran, after which they wished him good morrow and went away, each to his shop. Shemseddin seated himself in his shop as usual, but the merchants come not to him as of wont; so he called the Deputy and said to him, 'Why come not the merchants together as usual?' 'I know not how to tell thee,' answered Mohammed Semsem; 'for they have agreed to depose thee from the headship of the market and to recite the first chapter to thee no more.' 'And why so?' asked Shemseddin. 'What boy is this that sits beside thee,' asked the Deputy, 'and thou a man of years and chief of the merchants? Is he a slave or akin to thy wife? Verily, I think thou



lovest him and inclinest [unlawfully] to the boy.' With this, the Provost cried out at him, saying, 'God confound thee, hold thy peace! This is my son.' 'Never knew we that thou hadst a son,' rejoined the Deputy; and Shemseddin answered, 'When thou gavest me the seed-thickener, my wife conceived and bore this youth, whom I reared in a chamber under the earth, for fear of the evil eye, nor was it my purpose that he should come forth, till he could take his beard in his hand. However, his mother would not agree to this, and he would have me bring him to the market and stock him a shop and teach him to sell and buy.' So the Deputy returned to the other merchants and acquainted them with the truth of the case, whereupon they all arose and going in a body to Shemseddin's shop, stood before him and recited the first chapter of the Koran to him; after which they gave him joy of his son and said to him, 'God prosper root and branch! But even the poorest of us, when son or daughter is born to him, needs must he make a pot of custard and bid his friends and acquaintances; yet hast thou not done this.'

**Night** Quoth he, 'This is your due from me; be our rendezvous  
**xliv.** in the garden.' So next morning, he sent the carpet-layer to the pavilion in the garden and bade him furnish it. Moreover, he sent thither all that was needful for cooking, such as sheep and butter and so forth, and spread two tables, one in the saloon and another in the upper chamber. Then he and his son girded themselves, and he said to the latter, 'O my son, when a graybeard enters, I will meet him and carry him into the upper chamber and seat him at the table; and do thou, in like manner, receive the beardless youths and seat them at the table in the saloon.' 'O my father,' asked Alaeddin, 'why dost thou spread two tables, one for men and another for youths?' 'O my son,' answered Shemseddin, 'the beardless boy is ashamed to eat with men.' And his son was content with this

answer. So when the merchants arrived, Shemseddin received the men and seated them in the upper chamber, whilst Alaeddin received the youths and seated them in the saloon. Then the servants set on food and the guests ate and drank and made merry, whilst the attendants served them with sherbets and perfumed them with the fragrant smoke of scented woods; and the elders fell to conversing of matters of science and tradition. Now there was amongst them a merchant called Mehmoud of Balkh, a Muslim by profession but at heart a Magian, a man of lewd life, who had a passion for boys. He used to buy stuffs and merchandise of Alaeddin's father; and when he saw the boy, one look at his face cost him a thousand sighs and Satan dangled the jewel before his eyes, so that he was taken with desire and mad passion for him and his heart was filled with love of him. So he arose and made for the youths, who rose to receive him. At this moment, Alaeddin, being taken with an urgent occasion, withdrew to make water; whereupon Mehmoud turned to the other youths and said to them, 'If ye will incline Alaeddin's mind to journeying with me, I will give each of you a dress worth much money.' Then he returned to the men's party; and when Alaeddin came back, the youths rose to receive him and seated him in the place of honour. Presently, one of them said to his neighbour, 'O my lord Hassan, tell me how thou camest by the capital on which thou tradest.' 'When I came to man's estate,' answered Hassan, 'I said to my father, "O my father, give me merchandise." "O my son," answered he, "I have none by me: but go thou to some merchant and take of him money and traffic with it and learn to buy and sell and give and take." So I went to one of the merchants and borrowed of him a thousand dinars, with which I bought stuffs and carrying them to Damascus, sold them there at a profit of two for one. Then I bought Syrian stuffs and carrying them to Aleppo,

disposed of them there at a like profit; after which I bought stuffs of Aleppo and repaired with them to Baghdad, where I sold them with the same result; nor did I cease to buy and sell, till I was worth nigh ten thousand dinars.' Each of the others told a like tale, till it came to Alaeddin's turn, when they said to him, 'And thou, O my lord Alaeddin?' Quoth he, 'I was brought up in a chamber underground and came forth from it but this week; and I do but go to the shop and return home.' 'Thou art used to abide at home,' rejoined they, 'and knowest not the delight of travel, for travel is for men only.' 'I reck not of travel,' answered he, 'and value ease above all things.' Whereupon quoth one to the other, 'This youth is like the fish: when he leaves the water he dies.' Then they said to him, 'O Alaeddin, the glory of the sons of the merchants is not but in travel for the sake of gain.' Their talk angered him and he left them, weeping-eyed and mourning-hearted, and mounting his mule, returned home. When his mother saw him thus, she said to him, 'What ails thee to weep, O my son?' And he answered, 'All the sons of the merchants made mock of me and said to me, "There is no glory for a merchant's son save in travel for gain."' 'O my son,' rejoined she, 'hast thou a mind to travel?' 'Yes,' said he. 'And whither wilt thou go?' asked she. 'To the city of Baghdad,' answered he; 'for there folk make a profit of two to one on their goods.' 'O my son,' said she, 'thy father is a very rich man, and if he provide thee not with merchandise, I will do so of my own monies.' Quoth he, 'The best of favours is that which is quickly bestowed; if it is to be, now is the time for it.' So she called the servants and sent them for packers; then opening a store-house, brought out ten loads of stuffs, which the packers made up into bales for him. Meanwhile Shemseddin missed his son and enquiring after him, was told that he had mounted and gone home; so he too

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mounted and followed him. When he entered the house, he saw the bales packed ready and asked what they were; whereupon his wife told him what had passed between Alaeddin and the young merchants and he said, 'O my son, may God curse foreign travel! Verily, the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve) hath said, "It is of a man's good fortune that he have his livelihood in his own land;" and it was said of the ancients, "Leave travel, though but for a mile."' Then said he to his son, 'Art thou indeed resolved to travel and wilt thou not turn back from it?' 'Needs must I journey to Baghdad with merchandise,' answered Alaeddin; 'else will I put off my clothes and don a dervish's habit and go a-wandering over the world.' Quoth Shemseddin, 'I am no lackgood, but have great plenty of wealth and with me are stuffs and merchandise befitting every country in the world.' Then he showed him his goods and amongst the rest, forty bales ready packed, with the price, a thousand dinars, written on each, and said to him, 'Take these forty loads, together with those thy mother gave thee, and set out under the safeguard of God the Most High. But, O my son, I fear for thee a certain wood in thy way, called the Lion's Copse, and a valley called the Valley of Dogs, for there lives are lost without mercy.' 'How so?' asked Alaeddin. 'Because of a Bedouin highwayman, hight Ajlan,' answered his father, 'who harbours there.' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Fortune is with God; if any part in it be mine, no harm will befall me.' Then they rode to the cattle market, where a muleteer alighted from his mule and kissing the Provost's hand, said to him, 'O my lord, by Allah, it is long since thou hast employed me to carry merchandise for thee!' 'Every time hath its fortune and its men,' answered Shemseddin; 'and may God have mercy on him who said:

An old man went walking the ways of the world, So bowed and so bent  
that his beard swept his knee.



"What makes thee go doubled this fashion?" quoth I. He answered (and spread out his hands unto me),

"My youth hath escaped me; 'tis lost in the dust, And I bend me to seek it, where'er it may be."

O captain,<sup>1</sup> added he, 'it is not I, but this my son that is minded to travel.' 'God preserve him to thee!' said the muleteer. Then Shemseddin made a contract between Alaeddin and the muleteer, appointing that the former should be to the latter as a son, and gave him into his charge, saying, 'Take these hundred dinars for thy men.' Moreover, he bought his son threescore mules and a lamp and covering of honour for the tomb of Sheikh Abdulcadir el Jilani<sup>2</sup> and said to him, 'O my son, I am leaving thee, and this is thy father in my stead: whatsoever he biddeth thee, do thou obey him.' So saying, he returned home with the mules and servants and they made recitations of the Koran and held a festival that night in honour of the Sheikh Abdulcadir. On the morrow, Shemseddin gave his son ten thousand dinars, saying, 'O my son, when thou comest to Baghdad, if thou find stuffs brisk of sale, sell them; but if they be dull, spend of these dinars.' Then they loaded the mules and taking leave of their friends, set out on their journey.

Now Mehmoud of Balkh had made ready his own venture for Baghdad and set up his tents without the city, saying in himself, 'I shall not enjoy this youth but in the desert, where there is neither spy nor spoil-sport to trouble me.' It chanced that he had in hand a thousand dinars of Shemseddin's monies, the balance of a dealing between them; so he went to the Provost and bade him farewell; and he said to him, 'Give the thousand dinars to my son Alaeddin,' and commended the latter to his care, saying, 'He is as it were thy son.' Accordingly, Alaeddin joined

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* of the caravan.

<sup>2</sup> A famous Muslim saint of the twelfth century and founder of one of the four great orders of dervishes. He is buried at Baghdad.

company with Mehmoud, who charged the youth's cook to **Night**  
 dress nothing for him, but himself provided him and his **clib.**  
 company with meat and drink. Now he had four houses,  
 one at Cairo, another at Damascus, a third at Aleppo and  
 a fourth at Baghdad. So they set out and journeyed over  
 deserts and plains, till they drew near Damascus, when  
 Mehmoud sent his servant to Alaeddin, whom he found  
 reading. He went up to him and kissed his hands, and  
 Alaeddin asked him what he sought. 'My master salutes  
 thee,' answered the slave, 'and craves thy company to a  
 banquet in his house.' Quoth the youth, 'I must consult  
 my father Kemaleddin, the captain of the caravan.' So he  
 consulted the muleteer, who said, 'Do not go.' Then they  
 left Damascus and journeyed on till they came to Aleppo,  
 where Mehmoud made a second entertainment and sent to  
 bid Alaeddin; but the muleteer again forbade him. Then  
 they departed Aleppo and fared on, till they came within  
 a day's journey of Baghdad. Here Mehmoud repeated his  
 invitation a third time and Kemaleddin once more forbade  
 Alaeddin to accept it; but the latter said, 'I must needs  
 go.' So he rose and girding on a sword under his clothes,  
 repaired to the tent of Mehmoud of Balkh, who came to  
 meet him and saluted him. Then he set a sumptuous  
 repast before him, and they ate and drank and washed  
 their hands. Presently, Mehmoud bent towards Alaeddin,  
 to kiss him, but the youth received the kiss on his hand  
 and said to him, 'What wilt thou do?' Quoth Mehmoud,  
 'I brought thee hither that I might do delight with thee  
 in this jousting-ground, and we will comment the words  
 of him who saith:

Can't be thou wilt with us a momentling alight, Like to an ewekin's  
 milk or what not else of white,  
 And eat what liketh thee of dainty wastel-bread And take what thou  
 mayst get of silver small and bright  
 And bear off what thou wilt, sans grudging or constraint, Spanling or  
 full-told span or fistling filled outright?

Then he would have laid hands on Alaeddin ; but he rose and drawing his sword, said to him, 'Shame on thy gray hairs ! Hast thou no fear of God, and He of exceeding great might?'<sup>1</sup> May He have mercy on him who saith :

Look thou thy hoariness preserve from aught that may it stain, For whiteness still to take attaint is passing quick and fain.

This merchandise,' added he, 'is a trust from God and may not be sold. If I sold it to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver : but, by Allah, O filthy one, I will never again company with thee !' Then he returned to Kemaleddin and said to him, 'Yonder man is a lewd fellow and I will no longer consort with him nor suffer his company by the way.' 'O my son,' replied the muleteer, 'did I not forbid thee to go with him? But if we part company with him, I fear destruction for ourselves ; so let us still make one caravan.' But Alaeddin said, 'It may not be : I will never again travel with him.' So he loaded his beasts and journeyed onward, he and his company, till they came to a valley, where Alaeddin would have halted, but the muleteer said to him, 'Do not halt here ; rather let us fare forward and quicken our pace, so haply we may reach Baghdad before the gates are closed, for they open and shut them with the sun, for fear the schismatics should take the city and throw the books of learning into the Tigris.' 'O my father,' replied Alaeddin, 'I came not to Baghdad with this merchandise, for the sake of traffic, but to divert myself with the sight of foreign lands.' And Kemaleddin rejoined, 'O my son, we fear for thee and for thy goods from the wild Arabs.' But he answered, 'Harkye, sirrah, art thou master or servant? I will not enter Baghdad till the morning, that the townsfolk may see my merchandise and know me.' 'Do as thou wilt,' said the muleteer ; 'I have given thee good counsel, and thou must judge for thyself.' Then Alaeddin bade them

<sup>1</sup> *Koran* xiii. 14.



unload the mules and pitch the tent; so they did his bidding and abode there till the middle of the night, when the youth went out to do an occasion and seeing something gleaming afar off, said to Kemaleddin, 'O captain, what is yonder glittering?' The muleteer sat up and considering it straitly, knew it for the glint of spear-heads and Bedouin swords and harness. Now this was a troop of Bedouins under a chief called Ajlan Abou Naïb, Sheikh of the Arabs, and when they neared the camp and saw the baggage, they said, one to another, 'O night of booty!' Quoth Kemaleddin, 'Avaunt, O meanest of Arabs!' But Abou Naïb smote him with his javelin in the breast, that the point came out gleaming from his back, and he fell down dead at the tent-door. Then cried the water-carrier, 'Avaunt, O foulest of Arabs!' and one of them smote him with a sword upon the shoulder, that it issued shining from the tendons of the throat and he also fell slain. Then the Bedouins fell upon the caravan from all sides and slew the whole company except Alaeddin, after which they loaded the mules with the spoil and made off. Quoth Alaeddin to himself, 'Thy dress and mule will be the death of thee.' So he put off his cassock and threw it over the back of a mule, remaining in his shirt and drawers alone; after which he went to the door of the tent and finding there a pool of blood from the slain, rolled himself in it, till he was as a slain man, drowned in his blood. Meanwhile Ajlan said to his men, 'O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?' 'It was bound from Egypt for Baghdad,' answered they. 'Then,' said he, 'return to the slain, for methinks the owner of the caravan is not dead.' So they turned back and fell to larding the slain with lance and sword-thrusts, [lest any life were left in them,] till they came to Alaeddin, who had laid himself among the dead bodies. Quoth they, 'Thou dost but feign thyself dead,

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but we will make an end of thee.' So one of the Bedouins drew his javelin and would have plunged it into his breast. But he cried out, 'Save me, O my lord Abdulcadir!' and behold, he saw a hand turn the lance away from his breast to that of the muleteer, so that it pierced the latter and spared himself. Then the Bedouins made off; and when Alaeddin saw that the birds were flown with their purchase, he rose and set off running; but Abou Naïb looked back and said, 'O Arabs, I see somewhat moving.' So one of the Bedouins turned back and spying Alaeddin running, called out to him, saying, 'Flight shall not avail thee, and we after thee;' and he smote his mare with his fist and pricked after him. Then Alaeddin, seeing before him a watering tank and a cistern beside it, climbed up into a niche in the cistern and stretching himself along, feigned sleep and said, 'O gracious Protector, cover me with the veil of Thy protection, that may not be torn away!' Presently, the Bedouin came up to the cistern and standing in his stirrups put out his hand to lay hold of Alaeddin; but he said, 'Save me, O my lady Nefiseh!<sup>1</sup> Now is thy time!' And behold, a scorpion stung the Bedouin in the palm and he cried out, saying, 'Help, O Arabs! I am stung;' and fell off his mare. His comrades came up to him and set him on horseback again, saying, 'What hath befallen thee?' Quoth he, 'A scorpion stung me.' And they departed, leaving Alaeddin in the niche.

Meanwhile, Mehmoud of Balkh loaded his beasts and fared on till he came to the Valley of Dogs, where he found Alaeddin's men lying slain. At this he rejoiced and went on till he reached the reservoir. Now his mule was athirst and turned aside to drink, but took fright at Alaeddin's shadow in the water and started; whereupon Mehmoud raised his eyes and seeing Alaeddin lying in the niche, stripped to his shirt and trousers, said to him,

<sup>1</sup> Another well-known saint.





'Who hath dealt thus with thee and left thee in this ill plight?' 'The Bedouins,' answered Alaeddin, and Mehmoud said, 'O my son, the mules and the baggage were thy ransom; so do thou comfort thyself with the saying of the poet:

So but a man may win to save his soul alive from death, But as the  
paring of his nail his wealth he reckoneth.

But now, O my son,' continued he, 'come down and fear no hurt.' So he came down from the niche and Mehmoud mounted him on a mule and fared on with him, till they reached Baghdad, where he brought him to his own house and bade his servants carry him to the bath, saying to him, 'O my son, the goods and money were the ransom of thy life; but, if thou wilt hearken to me, I will give thee the worth of that thou hast lost, twice told.' When he came out of the bath, Mehmoud carried him into a saloon with four estrades, decorated with gold, and let bring a tray of all manner meats. So they ate and drank and Mehmoud turned to Alaeddin and would have taken a kiss of him; but he received it upon his hand and said, 'Dost thou persist in thy evil designs upon me? Did I not tell thee that, were I wont to sell this merchandise to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver?' Quoth Mehmoud, 'I will give thee neither mule nor clothes nor merchandise save at this price; for I am mad for love of thee, and God bless him who said:

Abou Bilal his saw of an object of love, Which from one of his elders  
himself did derive

"The lover's not healed of the pangs of desire By clips nor by kisses,  
excepting he swive."

'This may never be,' replied Alaeddin. 'Take back thy dress and thy mule and open the door, that I may go out.' So he opened the door, and Alaeddin went forth and walked on, with the dogs yelping at his heels, till he saw the



door of a mosque open and going in, took shelter in the vestibule. Presently, he espied a light approaching and examining it, saw that it came from a pair of lanterns borne by two slaves before two merchants, an old man of comely aspect and a youth. He heard the latter say to the other, 'O my uncle, I conjure thee by Allah, give me back my wife!' The old man replied, 'Did I not warn thee, many a time, when the oath of divorce was always in thy mouth, as it were thy Koran?' Then he turned and seeing Alaeddin, as he were a piece of the moon, said to him, 'Who art thou, O my son?' Quoth he, 'I am Alaeddin, son of Shemseddin, Provost of the merchants at Cairo. I besought my father for merchandise; so he packed me fifty loads of goods and gave me ten thousand dinars, wherewith I set out for Baghdad; but when I came to the Lion's Copse, the Bedouins fell upon me and took all I had. So I entered this city, knowing not where to pass the night, and seeing this place, I took shelter here.' 'O my son,' said the old man, 'what sayst thou to a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a mule worth other two thousand?' 'To what end wilt thou give me this?' asked Alaeddin, and the other answered, 'This young man, whom thou seest, is the only son of my brother and I have an only daughter called Zubeideh the Lutanist, who is endowed with beauty and grace. I married her to him and he loves her, but she hates him. Now he took an oath of triple divorcement and broke it.<sup>1</sup> As soon as she heard of this, she left him, and he egged on all the folk to intercede with me to restore her to him; but I told him that this could not lawfully be but by an intermediate marriage, and we have agreed to make some stranger the intermediary,

Night  
relat.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* He engaged to do somewhat, undertaking upon oath in case of default to divorce his wife by pronouncing the triple formula of divorcement, and she therefore became divorced, by operation of law, on his failure to keep his engagement.

so none may taunt him with this affair. So, as thou art a stranger, come with us and we will marry thee to her; thou shalt lie with her to-night and on the morrow divorce her, and we will give thee what I said.' 'By Allah,' quoth Alaeddin to himself, 'it were better to pass the night with a bride on a bed in a house, than in the streets and vestibules!' So he went with them to the Cadi, who, as soon as he saw Alaeddin, was moved to love of him and said to the old man, 'What is your will?' Quoth he, 'We wish to marry this young man to my daughter, as an intermediary, and the contract is to be for ten thousand dinars, dowry precedent, for which he shall give us a bond. If he divorce her in the morning, we will give him a thousand dinars and a mule and dress worth other two thousand; but if he divorce her not, he shall pay down the ten thousand dinars, according to the bond.' The Cadi drew up the marriage contract to this effect and the lady's father took a bond for the dowry. Then he took Alaeddin and clothing him anew, carried him to his daughter's house, where he left him at the door, whilst he himself went in to the young lady and gave her the bond, saying, 'Take the bond of thy dowry, for I have married thee to a handsome youth by name Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat; so do thou use him with all consideration.' Then he left her and went to his own lodging. Now the lady's cousin had an old waiting-woman, to whom he had done many a kindness and who used to visit Zubeideh; so he said to her, 'O my mother, if my cousin Zubeideh see this handsome young man, she will never after accept of me; so I would fain have thee contrive to keep them apart.' 'By thy youth,' answered she, 'I will not suffer him to approach her!' Then she went to Alaeddin and said to him, 'O my son, I have a warning to give thee, for the love of God the Most High, and do thou follow my advice, for I fear for thee from this damsel: let her lie alone and handle her

not nor draw near to her.' 'Why so?' asked he, and she answered, 'Because her body is full of elephantiasis and I fear lest she infect thy fair youth.' Quoth he, 'I have no need of her.' Moreover, she went to the lady and said the like to her of Alaeddin; and she replied, 'I have no need of him, but will let him lie alone, and on the morrow he shall go his way.' Then she called a slave-girl and said to her, 'Take him the tray of food, that he may sup.' So the maid carried him the tray of food and set it before him, and he ate his fill; after which he sat down and fell to reciting the chapter called *Ya-sin*<sup>1</sup> in a sweet voice. The lady listened to him and found his voice as melodious as the psalms of David, which when she heard, she exclaimed, 'Beshrew the old hag that told me that he was affected with leprosy! Surely, this was a lie against him, for this is not the voice of one who hath such a disease.' Then she took a lute of Indian workmanship and tuning it, sang the following verses, in a voice, whose music would stay the birds in mid-heaven:

I am enamoured of a fawn with black and languorous eyes; The willow-branches, as he goes, are jealous of him still.  
Me he rejects and others 'joy his favours in my stead. This is indeed the grace of God He gives to whom He will.

As soon as he had finished his recitation, he sang the following verse in reply:

My salutation to the shape that through the weeds doth show And to the roses in the cheeks' full-flowering meads that blow!

When she heard this, her inclination for him redoubled and she rose and lifted the curtain; and Alaeddin, seeing her, repeated these verses:

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand, And breathes out ambergris and gazes, a gazelle.  
Meseems as if grief loved my heart and when from her Estrangement I abide, possession to it fell.

<sup>1</sup> The 36th chapter of the Koran.

Thereupon she came forward, swinging her hips and swaying gracefully from side to side with a shape the handiwork of Him whose bounties are hidden, and each of them stole one glance at the other, that cost them a thousand regrets. Then, for that the arrows of her glances overcame his heart, he repeated the following verses :

The moon of the heavens she spied and called to my thought The nights of our loves in the meadows under her shine.

Yea, each of us saw a moon, but, sooth to say, It was her eyes<sup>1</sup> that I saw and she saw mine.<sup>2</sup>

Then she drew near him, and when there remained but two paces between them, he repeated these verses :

She took up three locks of her hair and spread them out one night And straight three nights discovered at once unto my sight.

Then did she turn her visage up to the moon of the sky And showed me two moons at one season, both burning clear and bright.

Then said he to her, 'Keep off from me, lest thou infect me.' Whereupon she uncovered her wrist to him, and he saw that it was cleft [like a peach] and its whiteness was as the whiteness of silver. Then said she, 'Hold off from me, thou, for thou art stricken with leprosy, and belike thou wilt infect me.' 'Who told thee I was a leper?' asked he, and she said, 'The old woman.' Quoth he, 'It was she told me that thou wast afflicted with elephantiasis.' So saying, he bared his arms and showed her that his skin was like virgin silver, whereupon she pressed him to her bosom and they clipped one another. Then she took him and lying down on her back, did off her trousers, whereupon that which his father had left him rose up [in rebellion] against him and he said, 'To it, O elder of yards, O father of nerves !' And putting his hands to her flanks, set the nerve of sweetness to the mouth of the cleft and thrust on to the wicket-gate. His

<sup>1</sup> or "herself."

<sup>2</sup> or "myself."



passage was by the gate of victories [or openings] and after this he entered the Monday market and those of Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and finding the carpet after the measure of the estrade, he plied [or turned] the box within its sheath [or cover] till he came to [the end of] it.<sup>1</sup> When it was morning, he exclaimed, 'Alas for delight that is not fulfilled! The raven<sup>2</sup> takes it and flies away!' 'What means this saying?' asked she, and he answered, 'O my lady, I have but this hour to abide with thee.' Quoth she, 'Who saith so?' and he, 'Thy father made me give him a bond to pay ten thousand dinars to thy dowry; and except I pay it this very day, they will lay me in prison therefor in the Cadi's house; and now my hand lacketh one para of the sum.' 'O my lord,' said she, 'is the marriage bond in thy hand or in theirs?' 'In mine,' answered he, 'but I have nothing.' Quoth she, 'The matter is easy; fear nothing. Take these hundred dinars; if I had more, I would give thee what thou lackest; but my father, of his love for my cousin, hath transported all his good, even to my trinkets, from my lodging to his. But when they send thee a serjeant of Night the court and the Cadi and my father bid thee divorce, tclbif. answer thou, "By what code is it right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning?" Then kiss the Cadi's hand and give him a present, and in like manner kiss the Assessors' hands and give each of them half a score dinars. So they will all speak with thee and if they say to thee, "Why dost thou not divorce her and take the thousand dinars and the mule and suit of clothes, according to contract?" do thou answer, "Every hair of her head is worth a thousand dinars to me and I will never

<sup>1</sup> This passage is full of double-entendres, the meaning of most of which is obvious, but others are so obscure and farfetched as to defy explanation.

<sup>2</sup> The raven is the symbol of separation.

put her away, neither will I take a suit of clothes nor aught else." If the Cadi say to thee, "Then pay down the dowry," do thou reply, "I am straitened at this present;" whereupon he and the Assessors will deal friendly with thee and allow thee time to pay.' Whilst they were talking, the Cadi's officer knocked at the door; so Alaeddin went down and the man said to him, 'The Cadi cites thee to answer thy father-in-law's summons.' Alaeddin gave him five dinars and said to him, 'O serjeant, by what code am I bound to marry at night and divorce next morning?' 'By none of ours,' answered the serjeant; 'and if thou be ignorant of the law, I will act as thine advocate.' Then they went to the court and the Cadi said to Alaeddin, 'Why dost thou not divorce the woman and take what falls to thee by the contract?' With this he went up to the Cadi and kissing his hand, put in it fifty dinars and said, 'O our lord the Cadi, by what code is it right that I should marry at night and divorce in the morning in my own despite?' 'Divorce on compulsion,' replied the Cadi, 'is sanctioned by no school of the Muslims.' Then said the lady's father, 'If thou wilt not divorce, pay me the ten thousand dinars, her dowry.' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Give me three days' time.' But the Cadi said, 'Three days is not enough; he shall give thee ten.' So they agreed to this and bound him to pay the dowry or divorce after ten days. Then he left them and taking meat and rice and butter and what else of food he needed, returned to his wife and told her what had passed; whereupon she said, 'Between night and day, wonders may happen: and God bless him who saith:

Be mild what time thou'rt ta'en with anger and despite And patient, if  
there fall misfortune on thy head.

Indeed, the nights are quick and great with child by time And of all  
wond'rous things are hourly brought to bed.'

Then she rose and made ready food and brought the

tray, and they ate and drank and made merry awhile. Presently, Alaeddin besought her to let him hear some music; so she took the lute and played a measure, that would have made the very rock dance for delight, and the strings cried out, in ecstasy, 'O Loving One!'<sup>1</sup> after which she passed into a livelier measure. As they were thus passing the time in mirth and delight, there came a knocking at the door and Zubeideh said to Alaeddin, 'Go and see who is at the door.' So he went down and finding four dervishes standing without, said to them, 'What do you want?' 'O my lord,' answered they, 'we are foreign dervishes, the food of whose souls is music and dainty verse, and we would fain take our pleasure with thee this night. On the morrow we will go our way, and with God the Most High be thy reward; for we adore music and there is not one of us but hath store of odes and songs and ballads.' 'I must consult [my wife],' answered he and returned and told Zubeideh, who said, 'Open the door to them.' So he went down again and bringing them up, made them sit down and welcomed them. Then he brought them food, but they would not eat and said, 'O my lord, our victual is to magnify God with our hearts and hear music with our ears: and God bless him who saith:

We come for your company only, and not for your feasts; For eating  
for eating's sake is nought but a fashion of beasts.

Just now,' added they, 'we heard pleasant music here; but when we knocked, it ceased; and we would fain know whether the player was a slave-girl, white or black, or a lady.' 'It was this my wife,' answered he and told them all that had befallen him, adding, 'My father-in-law hath bound me to pay a dowry of ten thousand dinars for her

<sup>1</sup> One of the names of God (Breslau. The two other editions have it, "O David!"). It is the custom of the Arabs, as will appear in others of these tales, to represent inarticulate music (such as that of birds and instruments) as celebrating the praises of God.

and they have given me ten days' time.' 'Have no care and think nought but good,' said one of the dervishes; 'for I am head of the convent and have forty dervishes under my hand. I will gather thee from them the ten thousand dinars and thou shalt pay thy father-in-law the dowry. But now bid thy wife make us music, that we may be heartened and solaced, for to some music is food, to others medicine and to others refreshment.'<sup>1</sup> Now these four dervishes were none other than the Khalif Haroun er Reshid and his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and Abou Nuwas ben Hani<sup>2</sup> and Mesrour the headsman; and the reason of their coming thither was that the Khalif, being heavy at heart, had called his Vizier and signified to him his wish to go forth and walk about the city, to divert himself. So they all four donned dervish habits and went out and walked about, till they came to Zubeideh's house and hearing music, were minded to know the cause. They spent the night in mirth and harmony and discourse, till the morning, when the Khalif laid a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet and taking leave of Alaeddin, went his way, he and his companions. Presently, Zubeideh lifted the carpet and finding the hundred dinars, gave them to her husband, saying, 'Take these hundred dinars that I have found under the prayer-carpet; the dervishes must have laid them there, without our knowledge.' So he took the money and repairing to the market, bought meat and rice and butter and so forth. When it was night, he lighted the candles and said to Zubeideh, 'The dervishes have not brought the ten thousand dinars that they promised me: but indeed they are poor men.' As they were talking, the dervishes knocked at the door and she said, 'Go down

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* a fan.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most celebrated, as well as the most witty and licentious, of Arab poets. He was one of Haroun er Reshid's boon-companions and died early in the ninth century.



and open to them.' So he went down and bringing them up, said to them, 'Have you brought me the ten thousand dinars?' 'We have not been able to get aught thereof as yet,' answered they; 'but fear nothing: to-morrow, God willing, we will make an alchymic operation for thee. But now bid thy wife play her best to us and gladden our hearts, for we love music.' So she made them music, that would have caused the very rocks to dance; and they passed the night in mirth and converse and good cheer, till the morning appeared with its light and shone, when they took leave of Alaeddin and went their way, after laying other hundred dinars under the carpet. They continued to visit him thus every night for nine nights, and each morning the Khalif put a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet, till the tenth night, when they came not. Now the reason of their failure to come was that the Khalif had sent to a great merchant, saying to him, 'Bring me fifty loads of stuffs, such as come from Cairo, each worth a thousand dinars, and write on each bale its price; and bring me also a male Abyssinian slave.' The merchant did the bidding of the Khalif, who wrote a letter to Alaeddin, as from his father Shemseddin, and committed it to the slave, together with the fifty loads and a basin and ewer of gold and other presents, saying to him, 'Take these bales and what else and go to such and such a quarter and enquire for Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, at the house of the Provost of the merchants.' So the slave took the letter and the goods and went out on his errand.

Meanwhile the lady's first husband went to her father and said to him, 'Come, let us go to Alaeddin and make him divorce my cousin.' So they set out, and when they came to the street in which Zubeideh's house stood, they found fifty mules, laden with stuffs, and a black slave riding on a she-mule. So they said to him, 'Whose goods are these?' 'They belong to my lord Alaeddin Abou esh

Shamat,' answered he. 'His father equipped him with merchandise and sent him on a journey to Baghdad; but the Bedouins fell on him and took all he had. So when the news of his despoilment reached his father, he despatched me to him with these fifty loads, in place of those he had lost, besides a mule laden with fifty thousand dinars and a parcel of clothes worth much money and a cloak of sables and a basin and ewer of gold.' When the old merchant heard this, he said, 'He whom thou seekest is my son-in-law and I will show thee his house.' Now Alaeddin was sitting in great concern, when one knocked at the door, and he said, 'O Zubeideh, God is all-knowing! Thy father hath surely sent me an officer from the Cadi or the Chief of the Police.' 'Go down,' said she, 'and see what it is.' So he went down and opening the door, found his father-in-law, with an Abyssinian slave, dusky-hued and pleasant of favour, riding on a mule. When the slave saw him, he alighted and kissed his hands: and Alaeddin said, 'What dost thou want?' Quoth he, 'I am the slave of my lord Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, son of Shemseddin, Provost of the merchants of Cairo, who has sent me to him with this charge.' Then he gave him the letter and Alaeddin, opening it, read what follows:

Harkye, my letter, when my belovéd sees thee, Kiss thou the earth  
before him and his shoes.

Look thou go softly and hasten not nor hurry, For in his hands are my  
life and my repose.

Then after the usual salutations from Shemseddin to his son, the letter proceeded thus: 'Know, O my son, that news hath reached me of the slaughter of thy men and the plunder of thy baggage; so I send thee herewith fifty loads of Egyptian stuffs, together with a suit of clothes and a cloak of sables and an ewer and basin of gold. Fear no evil and be not anywise troubled, for, O my son, the goods thou hast lost were the ransom of thy life. Thy mother

and the people of the house are well and in good case and send thee many greetings. Moreover, O my son, I hear that they have married thee, by way of intermediation, to the lady Zubeideh the Lutanist and have imposed on thee a dowry of ten thousand dinars; wherefore I send thee also fifty thousand dinars by thy slave Selim, the bearer of these presents, whereout thou mayest pay the dowry and provide thyself with the rest.' When Alaeddin had made an end of reading the letter, he took possession of the goods and turning to the old merchant, said to him, 'O my father-in-law, take the ten thousand dinars, thy daughter's dowry, and take also the loads of goods and dispose of them, and thine be the profit; only return me the cost-price.' 'Nay, by Allah,' answered he, 'I will take nothing; and as for thy wife's dowry, do thou settle it with her.' Then they went in to Zubeideh, after the goods had been brought in, and she said to her father, 'O my father, whose goods are these?' 'They belong to thy husband Alaeddin,' answered he; 'his father hath sent them to him in place of those of which the Bedouins spoiled him. Moreover, he hath sent him fifty thousand dinars and a parcel of clothes and a cloak of sables and a riding mule and an ewer and basin of gold. As for the dower, that is thine affair.' Thereupon Alaeddin rose and opening the chest [of money] gave her her dowry. Then said the lady's cousin, 'O my uncle, let him divorce to me my wife;' but the old man replied, 'This may never be now, for the marriage-tie is in his hand.' With this the young man went out, sore afflicted, and returning home, fell sick, for he had received his death-blow; so he took to his bed and presently died. But as for Alaeddin, he went to the market and buying what victual he needed, made a banquet as usual against the night, saying to Zubeideh, 'See these lying dervishes; they promised us and broke their promise.' Quoth she, 'Thou art the son of a Provost of the mer-

chants, yet did thy hand lack of a para; how then should it be with poor dervishes?' 'God the Most High hath enabled us to do without them,' answered Alaeddin; 'but never again will I open the door to them.' 'Why so,' asked she, 'seeing that their coming brought us good luck, and moreover, they put a hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet for us every night? So needs must thou open to them, if they come.' So when the day departed with its light and the night came, they lighted the candles and he said to her, 'Come, Zubeideh, make us music.' At this moment some one knocked at the door, and she said, 'Go and see who is at the door.' So he went down and opened it and seeing the dervishes, said, 'Welcome to the liars! Come up.' Accordingly, they went up with him, and he made them sit down and brought them the tray of food. So they ate and drank and made merry and presently said to him, 'O my lord, our hearts have been troubled for thee: what hath passed between thee and thy father-in-law?' 'God hath compensated us beyond our desire,' answered he. 'By Allah,' rejoined they, 'we were in fear for thee and nought kept us from thee but our lack of money.' Quoth he, 'My Lord hath vouchsafed me speedy relief; for my father hath sent me fifty thousand dinars and fifty loads of stuffs, each worth a thousand dinars, besides an Abyssinian slave and a riding mule and a suit of clothes and a basin and an ewer of gold. Moreover, I have made my peace with my father-in-law and my wife is confirmed to me; so praised be God for this!' Presently the Khalif rose to do an occasion; whereupon Jaafer turned to Alaeddin and said to him, 'Look to thy manners, for thou art in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful.' 'How have I failed in good breeding before the Commander of the Faithful,' asked he, 'and which of you is he?' Quoth Jaafer, 'He who went out but now is the Commander of the Faithful and I am the Vizier Jaafer:

Night  
cclix.



this is Mesroul the headsman, and this other is Abou Nuwas ben Hani. And now, O Alaeddin, use thy reason and bethink thee how many days' journey it is from Cairo hither.' 'Five-and-forty days' journey,' answered he, and Jaafer rejoined, 'Thy baggage was stolen but ten days ago; so how could the news have reached thy father, and how could he pack thee up other goods and send them to thee five-and-forty days' journey in ten days' time?' 'O my lord,' said Alaeddin, 'and whence then came they?' 'From the Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'of his much affection for thee.' As he spoke, the Khalif entered and Alaeddin, rising, kissed the ground before him and said, 'God keep thee, O Commander of the Faithful, and give thee long life, so the folk may not lack thy bounty and beneficence!' 'O Alaeddin,' replied the Khalif, 'let Zubeideh play us an air, by way of thank-offering for thy deliverance.' So she played him the rarest of measures on the lute, till the very stones shook for delight and the strings cried out for ecstasy, 'O Loving One!'<sup>1</sup> They spent the night after the merriest fashion, and in the morning, the Khalif said to Alaeddin, 'Come to the Divan to-morrow.' 'I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'so it please God and thou be well and in good case.' So on the morrow he took ten trays and putting a costly present on each, went up with them to the palace. As the Khalif was sitting on the throne, Alaeddin appeared at the door of the Divan, repeating the following verses :

Good fortune and glory still wait on thy days And rubbed in the dust be  
thine envier's nose !

May the days never stint to be white unto thee And black with despite  
be the days of thy foes !

'Welcome, O Alaeddin !' said the Khalif, and he replied,  
'O Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet (whom God

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 274.

bless and preserve) accepted presents; and these ten trays, with what is on them, are my present to thee.' The Khalif accepted his gift and ordering him a robe of honour, made him Provost of the merchants and gave him a seat in the Divan. Presently, his father-in-law came in, and seeing Alaeddin seated in his place and clad in a robe of honour, said to the Khalif, 'O King of the age, why is this man sitting in my place and wearing this robe of honour?' Quoth the Khalif, 'I have made him Provost of the merchants, and thou art deposed; for offices are by investiture and not in perpetuity.' 'Thou hast done well, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the merchant; 'for he is art and part of us. May God make the best of us the orderers of our affairs! How many a little one hath become great!' Then the Khalif wrote Alaeddin a patent [of investiture] and gave it to the Master of Police, who gave it to the crier and the latter made proclamation in the Divan, saying, 'None is Provost of the merchants but Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, and it behoves all to give heed to his words and pay him respect and honour and consideration!' Moreover, when the Divan broke up, the Master of the Police took Alaeddin and carried him through the thoroughfares of Baghdad, whilst the crier went before him, making proclamation of his dignity. Next day, Alaeddin opened a shop for his slave Selim and set him therein, to buy and sell, whilst he himself rode to the palace and took his place in the Khalif's Divan.

One day, as he sat in his place, one said to the Khalif, Night  
 O Commander of the Faithful, may thy head survive such cclx.  
 an one the boon-companion! He is gone to the mercy of God the Most High, but may thy life be prolonged! Quoth the Khalif, 'Where is Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat?' So he went up to the Commander of the Faithful, who clad him in a splendid dress of honour and made him his boon-companion in the dead man's room, appointing him

a monthly wage of a thousand dinars. He continued to fill his new office till, one day, as he sat in the Divan, according to his wont, an Amir came up with a sword and shield in his hand and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, mayst thou outlive the Chief of the Sixty, for he is this day dead;' whereupon the Khalif ordered Alaeddin a dress of honour and made him Chief of the Sixty, in place of the dead man, who had neither wife nor child. So Alaeddin laid hands on his estate, and the Khalif said to him, 'Bury him in the earth and take all he hath left of wealth and slaves, male and female.' Then he shook the handkerchief and dismissed the Divan, whereupon Alaeddin went forth, attended by Ahmed ed Denef, captain of the right hand, and Hassan Shouman, captain of the left hand troop of the Khalif's guard, riding at his either stirrup, each with his forty men. Presently, he turned to Hassan Shouman and his men and said to them, 'Plead ye for me with Captain Ahmed ed Denef, that he accept me as his son before God.' And Ahmed ed Denef assented, saying, 'I and my forty men will go before thee to the Divan every day.'

After this, Alaeddin abode in the Khalif's service many days; till one day it chanced that he left the Divan and returning home, dismissed Ahmed ed Denef and his men and sat down with his wife, who lighted the candles and went out of the room upon an occasion. Presently, he heard a great cry and running in haste to see what was the matter, found that it was his wife who had cried out. She was lying prone on the ground and when he put his hand to her breast, he found her dead. Now her father's house faced that of Alaeddin, and he, hearing her cry out, came in and said, 'What is the matter, O my lord Alaeddin?' 'O my father,' answered he, 'may thy head outlive thy daughter Zubeideh! But the honour we owe the dead is to bury them.' So, on the morrow, they buried her in

the earth and her husband and father condoled with each other. Moreover, Alaeddin put on mourning apparel and absented himself from the Divan, abiding tearful-eyed and sorrowful-hearted. After awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'O Vizier, what is the cause of Alaeddin's absence from the Divan?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'he is in mourning for his wife Zubeideh;' and the Khalif said, 'It behoves us to pay him a visit of condolence.' 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer. So they took horse and riding to Alaeddin's house, came in upon him with their attendants, as he sat at home; whereupon he rose to receive them and kissed the earth before the Khalif, who said to him, 'May God abundantly make good thy loss to thee!' 'May He preserve thee to us, O Commander of the Faithful!' answered Alaeddin. Then said the Khalif, 'O Alaeddin, why hast thou absented thyself from the Divan?' And he replied, 'Because of my mourning for my wife Zubeideh, O Commander of the Faithful.' 'Put away grief from thee,' rejoined the prince. 'She is dead and gone to the mercy of God the Most High, and mourning will avail thee nothing.' But Alaeddin said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I shall never leave mourning for her till I die and they bury me by her side.' Quoth Haroun, 'With God is compensation for every loss, and neither wealth nor device can deliver from death. God bless him who said :

Every son of woman, how long soe'er his life be, Must one day be carried  
upon the bulging bier.

How shall he have pleasure in life or hold it goodly, He unto whose  
checks the dust must soon adhere?'

Then, when he had made an end of condoling with him, he charged him not to absent himself from the Divan and returned to his palace. On the morrow, Alaeddin mounted and riding to the court, kissed the ground before the Khalif, who rose from the throne, to greet and welcome



him, and bade him take his appointed place in the Divan saying, 'O Alaeddin, thou art my guest to-night.' So presently he carried him into his seraglio and calling a slave-girl named Cout el Culoub, said to her, 'Alaeddin had a wife called Zubeideh, who used to sing to him and solace him of care and trouble; but she is gone to the mercy of God the Most High, and now I desire that thou play him an air of thy rarest fashion on the lute, that he may be diverted from his grief and mourning.' So she rose and made rare music; and the Khalif said to Alaeddin, 'What sayst thou of this damsel's voice?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'Zubeideh's voice was the finer; but she is rarely skilled in touching the lute, and her playing would make a rock dance.' 'Doth she please thee?' asked the Khalif. 'Yes, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered Alaeddin, and Haroun said, 'By the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, she is a gift from me to thee, she and her waiting-women!' Alaeddin thought that the Khalif was jesting with him; but, on the morrow, he went in to Cout el Culoub and said to her, 'I have given thee to Alaeddin;' whereat she rejoiced, for she had seen and loved him. Then the Khalif returned to the Divan and calling porters, said to them, 'Set Cout el Culoub and her waiting-women in a litter and carry them, together with her goods, to Alaeddin's house.' So they did as he bade them and left her in the upper chamber of Alaeddin's house, whilst the Khalif sat in the hall of audience till the close of the day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his harem.

Meanwhile, Cout el Culoub, having taken up her lodging in Alaeddin's house, with her women, forty in all, besides eunuchs, called two of the latter and said to them, 'Sit ye on stools, one on the right and another on the left hand of the door; and when Alaeddin comes home, kiss his hands and say to him, "Our mistress Cout el Culoub bids

thee to her in the upper chamber, for the Khalif hath given her to thee, her and her women.” ‘We hear and obey,’ answered they and did as she bade them. So, when Alaeddin returned, he found two of the Khalif’s eunuchs sitting at the door and was amazed and said to himself, ‘Surely, this is not my own house; or else what can have happened?’ When the eunuchs saw him, they rose and kissing his hands, said to him, ‘We are of the Khalif’s household and servants to Cout el Culoub, who salutes thee, giving thee to know that the Khalif hath bestowed her on thee, her and her women, and craves thy company.’ Quoth Alaeddin, ‘Say ye to her, “Thou art welcome; but so long as thou abidest with me, I will not enter thy lodging, for it befits not that what was the master’s should become the servant’s;” and ask her also what was the sum of her day’s expense in the Khalif’s palace.’ So they went in to her and did his errand to her, and she replied, ‘A hundred dinars a day;’ whereupon quoth he in himself, ‘There was no need for the Khalif to give me Cout el Culoub, that I should be put to such an expense for her; but there is no help for it.’ So she abode with him awhile and he assigned her daily a hundred dinars for her maintenance, till, one day, he absented himself from the Divan and the Khalif said to Jaafer, ‘O Vizier, I gave Cout el Culoub unto Alaeddin, that she might console him for his wife; but why doth he still hold aloof from us?’ ‘O Commander of the Faithful,’ answered Jaafer, ‘he spoke sooth who said, “Whoso findeth his beloved, forgetteth his friends.”’ ‘Belike he hath excuse for his absence,’ rejoined the Khalif; ‘but we will pay him a visit.’ (Now some days before this, Alaeddin had said to Jaafer, ‘I complained to the Khalif of my grief for the loss of my wife Zubeideh, and he gave me Cout el Culoub.’ And Jaafer replied, ‘Except he loved thee, he had not given her to thee. Hast thou gone in to her?’ ‘No, by Allah!’

answered Alaeddin. 'I know not her length from her breadth.' 'And why?' asked Jaafer. 'O Vizier,' replied Alaeddin, 'what befits the master befits not the servant.' Then the Khalif and Jaafer disguised themselves and went privily to visit Alaeddin; but he knew them and rising to them, kissed the hands of the Khalif, who looked at him and read trouble in his face. So he said to him, 'O Alaeddin, whence cometh this trouble in which I see thee? Hast thou gone in to Cout el Culoub?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'what befits the master befits not the servant. No, I have not gone in to her nor do I know her length from her breadth; so do thou quit me of her.' Quoth the Khalif, 'I would fain see her and question her of her case.' And Alaeddin replied, 'I hear and

**Night** obey, O Commander of the Faithful.' So the Khalif went  
**ccxix.** in to Cout el Culoub, who rose and kissed the ground before him, and said to her, 'Hath Alaeddin gone in to thee?' 'No, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she; 'I sent to bid him to me, but he would not come.' So he bade carry her back to the harem and saying to Alaeddin, 'Do not absent thyself from us,' returned to his palace. Accordingly, next morning, Alaeddin mounted and rode to the Divan, where he took his seat as Chief of the Sixty. Presently the Khalif bade his treasurer give the Vizier Jaafer ten thousand dinars and said to the latter, 'I charge thee to go down to the slave-market and buy Alaeddin a slave-girl with this sum.' So Jaafer took Alaeddin and went down with him to the bazaar. As chance would have it, that very day, the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Baghdad Police, had gone down to the market to buy a slave-girl for his son Hebezlem Bezazeh. Now this son he had by his wife Khatoun, and he was foul of favour and had reached the age of twenty, without learning to ride, albeit his father was a valiant cavalier and a doughty champion and delighted in battle and adventure. One

night, he had a dream of dalliance in sleep and told his mother, who rejoiced and told his father, saying, 'Fain would I find him a wife, for he is now apt for marriage.' Quoth Khalid, 'He is so foul of favour and withal so evil of odour, so sordid and churlish, that no woman would accept of him.' And she answered, 'We will buy him a slave-girl.' So it befell, for the accomplishment of that which God the Most High had decreed, that the Amir and his son went down, on the same day as Jaafer and Alaeddin, to the market, where they saw a beautiful girl, full of grace and symmetry, in the hands of a broker, and the Vizier said to the latter, 'O broker, ask her owner if he will take a thousand dinars for her.' The broker passed by the Amir and his son with the slave and Hebezlem took one look of her, that cost him a thousand sighs; and he fell passionately in love with her and said, 'O my father, buy me yonder slave-girl.' So the Amir called the broker, who brought the girl to him, and asked her her name. 'My name is Jessamine,' replied she; and he said to Hebezlem, 'O my son, an she please thee, bid for her.' Then he asked the broker what had been bidden for her and he replied, 'A thousand dinars.' 'She is mine for a thousand and one,' said Hebezlem, and the broker passed on to Alaeddin, who bid two thousand dinars for her; and as often as Hebezlem bid another dinar, Alaeddin bid a thousand. The Amir's son was vexed at this and said to the broker, 'Who is it that bids against me for the slave-girl?' 'It is the Vizier Jaafer,' answered the broker, 'who is minded to buy her for Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' Alaeddin continued to bid for her, till he brought her price up to ten thousand dinars, and her owner sold her to him for that sum. So he took the girl and said to her, 'I give thee thy freedom for the love of God the Most High.' Then he married her and carried her to his house. When the broker returned, after having delivered the girl and

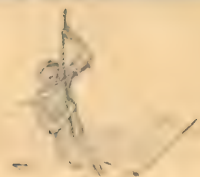


received his brokerage, Hebezlem called him and said to him, 'Where is the girl?' Quoth he, 'She was bought for ten thousand dinars by Alaeddin, who hath set her free and married her.' At this the young man was greatly cast down and heaving many a sigh, returned home, sick for love of the damsel. He threw himself on his bed and refused food, and passion and love-longing were sore upon him. When his mother saw him in this plight, she said to him, 'God keep thee, O my son! What ails thee?' And he answered, 'Buy me Jessamine, O my mother.' 'When the flower-seller passes,' said she, 'I will buy thee a basketful of jessamine.' Quoth he, 'It is not the jessamine one smells I want, but a slave-girl named Jessamine, whom my father would not buy for me.' So she said to her husband, 'Why didst thou not buy him the girl?' And he replied, 'What is fit for the master is not fit for the servant, and I have no power to take her; for no less a man bought her than Alaeddin, Chief of the Sixty.' Then the youth's weakness redoubled upon him, till he could neither sleep nor eat, and his mother bound her head with the fillets of mourning. Presently, as she sat at home, lamenting over her son, there came in to her an old woman, known as the mother of Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief, a knave who would bore through the stoutest wall and scale the highest and steal the very kohl from the eye. From his earliest years he had been given to these foul practices, till they made him captain of the watch, when he committed a robbery and the Chief of the Police, taking him in the act, carried him to the Khalif, who bade put him to death. But he sought protection of the Vizier, whose intercession the Khalif never rejected; so he pleaded for him with the Commander of the Faithful, who said, 'How canst thou intercede for a wretch who is the pest of the human race?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'do thou imprison him; he who built the [first] prison was a sage, seeing that a prison is the sepulchre of

the live and a cause for their enemies to exult.' So the Khalif bade lay him in chains and write thereon, 'Appointed to remain until death and not to be loosed but on the bench of the washer of the dead.' And they fettered him and cast him into prison. Now his mother was a frequent visitor to the house of the Master of the Police and used to go in to her son in prison and say to him, 'Did I not warn thee to turn from thy wicked ways?' 'God decreed this to me,' would he answer; 'but, O my mother, when thou visitest the Amir's wife, make her intercede for me with her husband.' So when the old woman came in to the Lady Khatoun, she found her bound with the fillets of mourning and said to her, 'Wherefore dost thou mourn?' 'For my son Hebezlem Bezazeh,' answered she, and the old woman exclaimed, 'God keep thy son! What hath befallen him?' So Khatoun told her the whole story, and she said, 'What wouldst thou say of him who should find means to save thy son?' 'And what wilt thou do?' asked the lady. Quoth the old woman, 'I have a son called Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief, who lies chained in prison, and on his fetters is written, "Appointed to remain till death." So do thou don thy richest clothes and trinkets and present thyself to thy husband with an open and smiling favour; and when he seeks of thee what men use to seek of women, put him off and say, "By Allah, it is a strange thing! When a man desires aught of his wife, he importunes her till she satisfies him; but if a wife desire aught of her husband, he will not grant it to her." Then he will say, "What dost thou want?" And do thou answer, "First swear to grant my request." If he swear to thee by his head or by Allah, say to him, "Swear to me the oath of divorce," and do not yield to him, except he do this. Then, if he swear to thee the oath of divorce, say to him, "Thou hast in prison a man called Ahmed Kemakim, and he has a poor mother, who

**N**ight is instant with me to urge thee to intercede for him with the Khalif, that he may relent towards him and thou earn a reward from God." 'I hear and obey,' answered Khatoun. So when her husband came in to her, she did as the old woman had taught her and extorted the required oath from him, before she would yield to his wishes. He lay with her that night and on the morrow, after he had made his ablutions and prayed the morning prayers, he repaired to the prison and said to Ahmed Kemakim, 'Harkye, O arch-thief, dost thou repent of thine ill deeds?' 'I do indeed repent and turn to God,' answered he, 'and say with heart and tongue, "I ask pardon of Allah."' So he carried him, still chained, to the Divan and kissed the earth before the Khalif, who said to him, 'O Amir Khalid, what seekest thou?' Then he brought forward Ahmed Kemakim, shuffling in his fetters, and the Khalif said to him, 'O Kemakim, art thou yet alive?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he, 'the wretched are long-lived.' Then said the Khalif to the Amir, 'Why hast thou brought him hither?' And he replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, he hath a poor, desolate mother, who hath none but him, and she hath had recourse to thy slave, imploring him to intercede with thee to set him free and make him Captain of the Watch as before; for he repenteth of his evil courses.' Quoth the Khalif to Ahmed, 'Dost thou repent of thy sins?' 'I do indeed repent to God, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered he; whereupon the Khalif called for the blacksmith and made him strike off his irons on the bench of the washer of the dead. Moreover, he restored him to his former office and charged him to walk in the way of good and righteousness. So he kissed the Khalif's hands and donning the captain's habit, went forth, whilst they made proclamation of his appointment.

He abode awhile in the exercise of his office, till, one day,







his mother went in to the wife of the Chief of the Police, who said to her, 'Praised be God who hath delivered thy son from prison and restored him to health and safety! But why dost thou not bid him cast about to get the girl Jessamine for my son Hebezlem Bezazeh?' 'That will I,' answered she and going out from her, repaired to her son. She found him drunken and said to him, 'O my son, none was the cause of thy release from prison but the wife of the Master of Police, and she would have thee go about to kill Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat and get his slave-girl Jessamine for her son Hebezlem Bezazeh.' 'That will be the easiest of things,' answered he, 'and I will set about it this very night.' Now this was the first night of the new month, and it was the Khalif's wont to pass that night with the Princess Zubeideh, for the setting free of a male or female slave or what not else of the like. On this occasion, he used to doff his royal habit and lay it upon a chair in the sitting-chamber, together with his rosary and dagger and royal signet and a golden lantern, adorned with three jewels strung on a wire of gold, by which he set great store, committing all these things to the charge of the eunuchs, whilst he went into the Lady Zubeideh's apartment. So Ahmed Kemakim waited till midnight, when Canopus shone and all creatures slept, whilst the Creator covered them with the curtain [of the dark]. Then he took his naked sword in one hand and his grappling-iron in the other, and repairing to the Khalif's pavilion, cast his grapnel on to the roof. It caught there and he fixed his rope-ladder and climbed up to the roof; then, raising the trap-door, let himself down into the saloon, where he found the eunuchs asleep. So he drugged them with henbane and taking the Khalif's dress and dagger and rosary and handkerchief and signet-ring and lantern, returned whence he came and betook himself to the house of Alaeddin, who had that night celebrated his wedding

festivities with Jessamine and had gone in to her and gotten her with child. Ahmed climbed over into his saloon and raising one of the marble slabs of the floor, dug a hole under it and laid the stolen things therein, all save the lantern, which he kept, saying in himself, 'I will set it before me, when I sit at wine, and drink by its light.' Then he plastered down the marble slab, as it was, and returning whence he came, went back to his own house. As soon as it was day, the Khalif went out into the sitting-chamber, and finding the eunuchs drugged with henbane, aroused them. Then he put his hand to the chair and found neither dress nor signet nor rosary nor dagger nor lantern; whereat he was exceeding wroth and donning the habit of anger, which was red, sat down in the Divan. So the Vizier Jaafer came forward and kissing the earth before him, said, 'May God avert the wrath of the Commander of the Faithful!' 'O Vizier,' answered the Khalif, 'I am exceeding wroth!'<sup>1</sup> 'What has happened?' asked Jaafer; so he told him what had happened and when the Chief of the Police appeared, with Ahmed Kemakim at his stirrup, he found the Khalif sore enraged. As soon as the latter saw him, he said to him, 'O Amir Khalid, how goes Baghdad?' And he answered, 'It is safe and quiet.' 'Thou liest!' rejoined the Khalif. 'How so, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked the Amir. So he told him the case and added, 'I charge thee to bring me back all the stolen things.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied the Amir, 'the vinegar-worm is of and in the vinegar, and no stranger can get at this place.'<sup>2</sup> But the Khalif said, 'Except thou

<sup>1</sup> The above appears to be the meaning of this somewhat obscure passage; but we may perhaps translate it as follows: "May God preserve (us) from the mischief of the Commander of the Faithful!" "O Vizier," answered the Khalif, "the mischief is passing great."

<sup>2</sup> Meaning that the robbery must have been committed by some inmate of the palace.

bring me these things, I will put thee to death.' Quoth Khalid, 'Ere thou slay me, slay Ahmed Kemakim, for none should know the robber and the traitor but the captain of the watch.' Then came forward Ahmed Kemakim and said to the Khalif, 'Accept my intercession for the Master of Police, and I will be responsible to thee for the thief and will follow his track till I find him; but give me two Cadis and two Assessors, for he who did this thing feareth thee not, nor doth he fear the Chief of the Police nor any other.' 'Thou shalt have what thou seekest,' answered the Khalif; 'but let search be made first in my palace and then in those of the Vizier and the Chief of the Sixty.' 'Thou sayst well, O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Ahmed; 'most like the thief is one who has been reared in thy household or that of one of thy chief officers.' 'As my head liveth,' said Haroun, 'whosoever shall appear to have done the deed, I will put him to death, be it my very son!' Then Ahmed Kemakim received a written warrant to enter and search the houses and taking in his hand a Night [divining] rod made of equal parts of bronze, copper, iron and steel, went forth, attended by the Cadis and Assessors and the Chief of the Police. He first searched the palace of the Khalif, then that of the Vizier Jaafer; after which he went the round of the houses of the chamberlains and officers, till he came to that of Alaeddin. When the latter heard the clamour before his house, he left his wife and opening the door, found the Master of Police without, with a crowd of people. So he said, 'What is the matter, O Amir Khalid?' The Chief of the Police told him the case and Alaeddin said, 'Enter my house and search it.' 'Pardon, O my lord,' replied the Amir; 'thou art a man in authority,<sup>1</sup> and God forbid that such should be guilty of treason!' Quoth Alaeddin, 'Needs must my house be

<sup>1</sup> *Amir*. Thus the Breslau edition; the two others give *Amin*, i.e. one who is trusted or in a position of trust.



searched.' So they entered, and Ahmed Kemakim went straight to the saloon and let the rod fall upon the slab, under which he had buried the stolen goods, with such force that the marble broke in sunder and discovered something that glittered underneath. Then said he, 'In the name of God! what He willeth! Thanks to our coming, we have lit upon a treasure. Let us go down into this hiding-place and see what it is therein.' So the Cadis and Assessors looked down into the hole and finding there the stolen goods, drew up a statement of how they had discovered them in Alaeddin's house, to which they set their seals. Then they bade seize upon Alaeddin and took his turban from his head, and making an inventory of all his property and effects, [sealed them up]. Meanwhile, Ahmed Kemakim laid hands on Jessamine, who was with child by Alaeddin, and committed her to his mother, saying, 'Deliver her to the Lady Khatoun.' So the old woman took her and carried her to the wife of the Master of Police. As soon as Hebezlem saw her, health and strength returned to him and he arose forthright, rejoicing greatly, and would have drawn near her: but she pulled a dagger from her girdle and said, 'Keep off from me, or I will kill thee and myself after.' 'O strumpet,' exclaimed his mother, 'let my son have his will of thee!' But Jessamine answered, 'O bitch, by what code is it lawful for a woman to marry two husbands, and how shall the dog take the lion's place?' With this Hebezlem's passion redoubled and he sickened for unfulfilled desire and refusing food, took to his bed again. Then said his mother to her, 'O harlot, how canst thou make me thus to sorrow for my son? Needs must I punish thee, and as for Alaeddin, he will assuredly be hanged.' 'And I will die for love of him,' answered Jessamine. Then Khatoun stripped her of her jewels and silken raiment and clothing her in sackcloth drawers and a shift of hair-cloth, sent her down into the kitchen and made

her a scullery-wench, saying, 'Thy punishment shall be to split wood and peel onions and set fire under the cooking pots.' Quoth she, 'I am willing to brook all manner of hardship and servitude, but not thy son's sight.' But God inclined the hearts of the slave-girls to her and they used to do her service in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, they carried Alaeddin to the Divan and brought him, together with the stolen goods, before the Khalif, who said, 'Where did ye find them?' 'Amiddleward Alaeddin's house,' answered they; whereat the Khalif was filled with wrath and took the things, but found not the lantern among them, and said to Alaeddin, 'Where is the lantern?' 'I know nought of it,' answered he; 'it was not I that stole it.' 'O traitor,' said the Khalif, 'how comes it that I brought thee near unto me and thou hast cast me out, and I trusted in thee and thou hast betrayed me?' And he commanded to hang him. So the Chief of the Police took him and went down with him into the city, whilst the crier forewent them, proclaiming aloud and saying, 'This is the reward and the least of the reward of him who doth treason against the orthodox Khalifs!' And the folk flocked to the gallows.

Meanwhile, Ahmed ed Denef, Alaeddin's adopted father, was sitting, making merry with his followers in a garden, when in came one of the water-carriers of the Divan and kissing Ahmed's hand, said to him, 'O Captain, thou sittest at thine ease, with water running at thy feet, and knowest not what has happened.' 'What is to do?' asked Ahmed, and the other answered, 'They have gone down with thine adopted son, Alaeddin, to the gallows.' 'O Hassan Shouman,' said Ahmed, 'what sayst thou of this?' 'Assuredly, Alaeddin is innocent,' replied his lieutenant; 'and this is some enemy's practice against him.' Quoth Ahmed, 'What counsellest thou?' And Hassan said, 'God willing, we must rescue him.' Then he went to the prison

and said to the gaoler, 'Give us some one deserving of death.' So he gave him one that was likest to Alaeddin and they covered his head and carried him to the place of execution between Ahmed ed Denef and Ali ez Zibec of Cairo. Now they had brought Alaeddin to the gibbet, to hang him, but Ahmed ed Denef came forward and set his foot on that of the hangman, who said, 'Give me room to do my office.' 'O accursed one,' replied Ahmed, 'take this man and hang him in Alaeddin's stead; for he is innocent and we will ransom him with this fellow, even as Abraham ransomed Ishmael<sup>1</sup> with the ram.' 'So the hangman took the man and hanged him in Alaeddin's room. Then Ahmed and Ali took Alaeddin and carried him to the house of the former, to whom said he, 'O my father, may God abundantly requite thee!' 'O Alaeddin,' said Ahmed, 'what is this thou hast done? God's mercy on him who said, "Whoso trusteth in thee, betray him not, though thou be a traitor." Now the Khalif set thee in high place about him and styled thee "Trusty" and "Faithful;" how then couldst thou deal thus with him and steal his goods?' 'By the Most Great Name, O my father,' replied Alaeddin, 'I had no hand in this, nor do I know who did it.' Quoth Ahmed, 'Of a surety none did this but a manifest enemy and whoso doth aught shall be requited for his deed; but, O Alaeddin, thou canst tarry no longer in Baghdad, for kings, O my son, may not be bought off and longsome is his travail whom they pursue.' 'Whither shall I go, O my father?' asked Alaeddin. 'O my son,' answered Ahmed, 'I will bring thee to Alexandria, for it is a blessed place; its environs are green and its sojourn pleasant.' And Alaeddin said, 'I hear and obey, O my father.' So Ahmed said to Hassan Shouman, 'Be mindful and when the Khalif asks for me, say I am gone

Night  
cclxb.

<sup>1</sup> According to Mohammedan tradition, it was Ishmael, not Isaac, whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice.

on a circuit of the provinces.' Then, taking Alaeddin, he went forth of Baghdad and stayed not till they came to the vineyards and gardens, where they met two Jews of the Khalif's tax-gatherers, riding on mules, and Ahmed said to them, 'Give me the guard-money.'<sup>1</sup> 'Why should we give thee guard-money?' asked they. 'Because,' answered he, 'I am the patrol of this valley.' So they gave him each a hundred dinars, after which he slew them and took their mules, one of which he mounted, whilst Alaeddin bestrode the other. Then they rode on, till they came to the city of Ayas<sup>2</sup> and put up for the night at an inn. Next morning, Alaeddin sold his own mule and committed that of Ahmed to the charge of the doorkeeper of the inn, after which they took ship from the port of Ayas and sailed to Alexandria. Here they landed and proceeded to the bazaar, where they found a broker crying a shop and a chamber behind it for sale. The last bidding for the premises (which belonged to the Treasury) was nine hundred and fifty dirhems;<sup>3</sup> so Alaeddin bid a thousand and his offer being accepted, took the keys and opened the shop and room, which latter he found furnished with carpets and cushions. Moreover, he found there a storehouse full of sails and masts and ropes and chests and bags of beads and shells and stirrups and axes and maces and knives and scissors and what not else, for the last owner of the shop had been a dealer in second-hand goods. So he took his seat in the shop and Ahmed ed Denef said to him, 'O my son, the shop and room and that which is therein are become thine; so abide thou here and buy and sell and grudge not, neither repine; for God the Most High blesseth trade.' After this he abode with

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a sort of blackmail levied upon merchants and others by the soldiers who protected them against the Bedouins.

<sup>2</sup> A village on the Gulf of Scanderoon.

<sup>3</sup> Or perhaps dinars, the coin not being specified.



him three days and on the fourth he took leave of him, saying, 'O my son, abide here till I bring thee the Khalif's pardon and learn who hath played thee this trick.' Then he took ship for Ayas, where he took the mule from the inn and returning to Baghdad, foregathered with Hassan Shouman, to whom said he, 'Has the Khalif asked for me?' 'No,' answered Hassan, 'nor hast thou come to his thought.' So he resumed his service about the Khalif's person and set himself to seek news of Alaeddin's case, till one day he heard the Khalif say to the Vizier, 'See, O Jaafer, how Alaeddin dealt with me!' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'thou hast requited him with hanging, and it was what he deserved.' Quoth Haroun, 'I have a mind to go down and see him hanging.' And the Vizier answered, 'As thou wilt, O Commander of the Faithful.' So the Khalif and Jaafer went down to the place of execution, and the former, raising his eyes, saw the hanged man to be other than Alaeddin and said to the Vizier, 'This is not Alaeddin.' 'How knowest thou that it is not he?' asked the Vizier, and the Khalif answered, 'Alaeddin was short and this fellow is tall.' Quoth Jaafer, 'Hanging stretches a man.' 'But,' rejoined the Khalif, 'Alaeddin was fair and this man's face is black.' 'Knowest thou not, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer, 'that death (by hanging) causes blackness?' Then the Khalif bade take down the body and they found the names of the first two Khalifs, Abou Bekr and Omar, written on its heels; whereupon quoth the Khalif, 'O Vizier, Alaeddin was a Sunnite, and this fellow is a Shiyäite.'<sup>1</sup> 'Glory be to God who knoweth the hidden things!' answered Jaafer. 'We know not whether this

<sup>1</sup> Or sectary of Ali. The Shiyäites did not acknowledge the first three Khalifs Abou Bekr, Omar and Othman, and were wont to write their names upon their heels, in token of contempt. The Sunnites are the orthodox Muslims, who accept the actual order of things.

was he or another.' Then the Khalif bade bury the body and Alaeddin became altogether forgotten.

As for Hebezlem Bezazeh, the Amir Khalid's son, he ceased not to languish for passion and desire, till he died and they buried him; whilst Jessamine accomplished the months of her pregnancy and being taken with the pains of labour, gave birth to a male child like the moon. The serving-women said to her, 'What wilt thou name him?' And she answered, 'Were his father alive, he had named him; but now I will name him Aslan.' She gave him suck two years, then weaned him, and he crawled and walked. One day, whilst his mother was busied with the service of the kitchen, the child went out and seeing the stairs, mounted to the guest-chamber,<sup>1</sup> where the Amir Khalid was sitting. When the latter saw him, he took him in his lap and glorified his Lord for that which He had created and fashioned forth; then eyeing him straitly, he saw that he was the likest of all creatures to Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat; and God informed his heart with love of the boy. Presently, his mother Jessamine sought for him and finding him not, mounted to the guest-chamber, where she saw the Amir seated, with the child playing in his lap. The latter, spying his mother, would have thrown himself upon her: but the Amir held him back and said to Jessamine, 'Come hither, O damsel.' So she came to him, and he said to her, 'Whose son is this?' Quoth she, 'He is my son and the darling of my heart.' 'Who is his father?' asked the Amir; and she answered, 'His father was Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, but now he is become thy son.' Quoth Khalid, 'Alaeddin was a traitor.' 'God deliver him from treason!' replied she. 'God forbid that the Faithful should be a traitor!' Then said he, 'When the boy grows up and says to thee, "Who is my father?" say thou to him, "Thou

<sup>1</sup> An open-fronted reception-room, generally on the first floor and giving on the interior court of the house.

art the son of the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Police.” And she answered, ‘I hear and obey.’ Then he circumcised the boy and reared him after the goodliest fashion, bringing him a tutor, who taught him to read and write; so he read (and commented) the Koran twice and learnt it by heart and grew up, calling the Amir father. Moreover, the latter used to go down with him to the tilting-ground and assemble horsemen and teach the lad warlike exercises and the use of arms, so that, by the time he was fourteen years old, he became a valiant and accomplished cavalier and gained the rank of Amir.<sup>1</sup>

It chanced one day that he fell in with Ahmed Kemakim and clapping up an acquaintance with him, accompanied him to the tavern, where Ahmed took out the lantern he had stolen from the Khalif and fell to plying the wine-cup by its light, till he became drunken. Presently Aslan said to him, ‘O Captain, give me yonder lantern;’ but he replied, ‘I cannot give it thee.’ ‘Why not?’ asked Aslan. ‘Because,’ answered Ahmed, ‘lives have been lost for it.’ ‘Whose life?’ asked Aslan; and Ahmed said, ‘There came hither a man name Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, who was made Captain of the Sixty and lost his life through this lantern.’ Quoth Aslan, ‘And how was that?’ ‘Know,’ replied Ahmed Kemakim, ‘that thou hadst an elder brother by name Hebezlem Bezazeh, for whom, when he became apt for marriage, thy father would have bought a slave-girl named Jessamine.’ And he went on to tell him the whole story of Hebezlem’s illness and what befell Alaeddin, undeserved. When Aslan heard this, he said in himself, ‘Most like this slave-girl was my mother Jessamine and my father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.’ So he went out from him, sorrowful, and met Ahmed ed Denef, who exclaimed at sight of him, ‘Glory be to Him to whom none is like!’ ‘At what dost thou marvel, O my

<sup>1</sup> Instead of “rank of Amir,” we should perhaps read “kighthood.”

chief?' asked Hassan Shouman. 'At the make of yonder boy Aslan,' replied Ed Denef; 'for he is the likest of all creatures to Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' Then he called Aslan and said to him, 'What is thy mother's name?' 'She is called the damsel Jessamine,' answered Aslan; and Ed Denef said, 'Harkye, Aslan, take heart and be of good cheer, for thy father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat: but, O my son, go thou in to thy mother and question her of thy father.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he, and going in to his mother, said to her, 'Who is my father?' Quoth she, 'The Amir Khalid is thy father.' 'Not so,' rejoined he, 'my father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' At this, she wept and said, 'Who told thee this?' 'Ahmed ed Denef, the Captain of the Guard,' answered he; so she told him the whole story, saying, 'O my son, the truth can no longer be hidden: know that Alaeddin was indeed thy father, but it was the Amir Khalid who reared thee and adopted thee as his son. And now, O my son, when thou seest Ahmed ed Denef, do thou say to him, "I conjure thee, by Allah, O my chief, avenge me on the murderer of my father Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat!"' So he went out from her and betaking himself to Ahmed ed Denef, kissed his hand. Quoth Ed Denef, 'What ails thee, O Aslan?' And he answered, 'I know now for certain that I am the son of Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat and I would have thee avenge me of my father's murderer.' 'And who was thy father's murderer?' asked Ed Denef. 'Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief,' replied Aslan. 'Who told thee this?' said Ed Denef, and Aslan answered, 'I saw in his hand the lantern hung with jewels, that was lost with the rest of the Khalif's gear, and asked him to give it me; but he refused, saying, "Lives have been lost on account of this," and told me how it was he who had broken into the palace and stolen the goods and hidden them in my father's house.' Then said

Night  
ccxvi.



Ed Deneb, 'When thou seest the Amir Khalif don his harness of war, beg him to equip thee like himself and take thee with him. Then do thou some feat of prowess before the Khalif and he will say to thee, "Ask a boon of me, O Aslan." And do thou answer, "I ask of thee that thou avenge me of my father's murderer." If he say, "Thy father is alive and is the Amir Khalid, the Chief of the Police," answer thou, "My father was Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, and the Amir Khalid is only my father by right of fosterage and adoption." Then tell him all that passed between thee and Ahmed Kemakim and say, "O Commander of the Faithful, order him to be searched and I will bring the lantern forth of his bosom."' 'I hear and obey,' answered Aslan and returning to the Amir Khalid, found him making ready to repair to the Divan and said to him, 'I would fain have thee arm and harness me like thyself and carry me to the Divan.' So he equipped him and carried him to the Divan, with Ahmed Kemakim at his stirrup. Then the Khalif sallied forth of Baghdad with his retinue and let pitch tents and pavilions without the city; whereupon the troops divided into two parties and fell to playing at ball and striking it with the mallet from one to the other. Now there was among the troops a spy, who had been hired to kill the Khalif; so he took the ball and smiting it with the mallet, drove it straight at the Khalif's face; but Aslan interposed and catching it in mid-volley, drove it back at him who smote it, so that it struck him between the shoulders and he fell to the ground. The Khalif exclaimed, 'God bless thee, O Aslan!' and they all dismounted and sat on chairs. Then the Khalif bade bring the smiter of the ball before him and said to him, 'Who moved thee to do this thing and art thou friend or foe?' Quoth he, 'I am a foe and it was my purpose to kill thee.' 'And wherefore?' asked the Khalif. 'Art thou not an (orthodox) Muslim?' 'No,' replied the spy; 'I am a

Shiyāite.' So the Khalif bade put him to death and said to Aslan, 'Ask a boon of me.' Quoth he, 'I ask of thee that thou avenge me of my father's murderer.' 'Thy father is alive,' answered the Khalif; 'and there he stands.' 'And who is he?' asked Aslan. The Khalif replied, 'He is the Amir Khalid, Chief of the Police.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Aslan, 'he is no father of mine, save by right of fosterage; my father was none other than Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat.' 'Then thy father was a traitor,' said the Khalif. 'God forbid, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Aslan, 'that the Faithful should be a traitor! But how did he wrong thee?' Quoth the Khalif, 'He stole my royal habit and what was therewith.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined Aslan, 'God forbend that my father should be a traitor! But, O my lord, didst thou ever recover the lantern that was stolen from thee?' 'No,' answered the Khalif, 'we never got it back.' And Aslan said, 'I saw it in the hands of Ahmed Kemakim and begged it of him; but he refused to give it me, saying, "Lives have been lost on account of this." Then he told me of the sickness of Hebezlem Bezazeh, son of the Amir Khalid, by reason of his passion for the damsel Jessamine, and how he himself was released from prison and that it was he who stole the lamp and robe and so forth. Do thou, then, O Commander of the Faithful, avenge me of my father on him who murdered him.' So the Khalif caused Ahmed Kemakim to be brought before him and sending for Ahmed ed Denef, bade him search him; whereupon he put his hand into the thief's bosom and pulled out the lamp. 'Harkye, traitor,' said the Khalif, 'whence hadst thou this lantern?' And Kemakim replied, 'I bought it, O Commander of the Faithful!' 'Where didst thou buy it?' said the Khalif, 'and who could come by its like to sell it to thee?' Then they beat him, till he confessed that he had stolen the lantern and the rest, and the Khalif said, 'O traitor, what

moved thee to do this thing and ruin Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat, the Trusty and Well-beloved ?' Then he bade lay hands on him and on the Chief of the Police, but the latter said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I am unjustly entreated ; thou badest me hang him, and I had no knowledge of this plot, for the thing was contrived between Ahmed Kemakim and his mother and my wife. I crave thine intercession, O Aslan.' So Aslan interceded for him with the Khalif, who said, 'What hath God done with this lad's mother ?' 'She is with me,' answered Khalid, and the Khalif said, 'I command thee to bid thy wife dress her in her own clothes and ornaments and restore her to her former rank ; and do thou remove the seals from Alaeddin's house and give his son possession of his estate.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Khalid, and going forth, carried the Khalif's order to his wife, who clad Jessamine in her own apparel ; whilst he himself removed the seals from Alaeddin's house and gave Aslan the keys. Then said the Khalif to Aslan, 'Ask a boon of me ;' and he replied, 'I beseech thee to unite me with my father.' Whereat the Khalif wept and said, 'Most like it was thy father that was hanged and is dead ; but by the life of my forefathers, whoso bringeth me the glad news that he is yet in the bonds of life, I will give him all he seeketh !' Then came forward Ahmed ed Denef and kissing the earth before the Khalif, said, 'Grant me indemnity, O Commander of the Faithful !' 'Thou hast it,' answered the Khalif ; and Ed Denef said, 'I give thee the good news that Alaeddin is alive and well.' Quoth the Khalif, 'What is this thou sayest ?' 'As thy head liveth,' answered Ed Denef, 'I speak sooth ; for I ransomed him with another, of those who deserved death, and carried him to Alexandria, where  
 Night I set him up as a dealer in second-hand goods.' Then  
 relabif. said Er Reshid, 'I charge thee fetch him to me ;' and Ed Denef replied, 'I hear and obey ;' whereupon the

Khalif bade give him ten thousand dinars and he set out for Alexandria.

Meanwhile Alaeddin sold all that was in his shop, till he had but a few things left and amongst the rest a bag. So he shook the bag and there fell out a jewel, big enough to fill the palm of the hand, hanging to a chain of gold and having five faces, whereon were names and talismanic characters, as they were ant-tracks. 'God is All-knowing!' quoth he. 'Belike this is a talisman.' So he rubbed each face; but nothing came of it and he said to himself, 'Doubtless it is a piece of [naturally] variegated onyx,' and hung it up in the shop. Presently, a Frank passed along the street and seeing the jewel hanging up, seated himself before the shop and said to Alaeddin, 'O my lord, is yonder jewel for sale?' 'All I have is for sale,' answered Alaeddin; and the Frank said, 'Wilt thou sell it me for fourscore thousand dinars?' 'May God open!'<sup>1</sup> replied Alaeddin. 'Wilt thou sell it for a hundred thousand dinars?' asked the Frank, and he answered, 'I sell it to thee for a hundred thousand dinars; pay me down the money.' Quoth the Frank, 'I cannot carry such a sum about me, for there are thieves and sharpers in Alexandria; but come with me to my ship and I will pay thee the money and give thee to boot a bale of Angora wool, a bale of satin, a bale of velvet and a bale of broadcloth.' So Alaeddin rose and giving the jewel to the Frank, locked up his shop and committed the keys to his neighbour, saying, 'Keep these keys for me, whilst I go with this Frank to his ship and take the price of my jewel. If I be long absent and there come to thee Captain Ahmed ed Denef,—he who set me up in this shop,—give him the keys and tell him where I am.' Then he went with the Frank to his ship, where the latter set him a stool and making him sit down, said [to his men], 'Bring the money.'

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* It is not enough. See Vol. II. p. 74, note.



So [they brought it and] he paid him the price of the jewel and gave him the four bales he had promised him ; after which he said to him, 'O my lord, honour me by taking a morsel or a draught of water.' And Alaeddin answered, 'If thou have any water, give me to drink.' So the Frank called for drink, and they brought sherbets, drugged with henbane, of which no sooner had Alaeddin drunk, than he fell over on his back ; whereupon they weighed anchor and shoving off, shipped the poles and made sail. The wind blew fair and they sailed till they lost sight of land, when the Frank bade bring Alaeddin up out of the hold and made him smell to the counter-drug, whereupon he opened his eyes and said, 'Where am I?' 'Thou art bound and in my power,' answered the Frank ; 'and if thou hadst refused to take a hundred thousand dinars for the jewel, I would have bidden thee more.' 'What art thou?' asked Alaeddin, and the other replied, 'I am a sea-captain and mean to carry thee to my mistress.' As they were talking, a ship hove in sight, with forty Muslim merchants on board ; so the Frank captain gave chase and coming up with the vessel, made fast to it with grappling-irons. Then he boarded it with his men and took it and plundered it ; after which he sailed on with his prize, till he reached the city of Genoa, where he repaired to the gate of a palace, that gave upon the sea, and there came forth to him a veiled damsel, who said, 'Hast thou brought the jewel and its owner?' 'I have brought them both,' answered he ; and she said, 'Then give me the jewel.' So he gave it to her and returning to the port, fired guns to announce his safe return ; whereupon the King of the city, being notified of his arrival, came down to receive him and said to him, 'What manner of voyage hast thou had?' 'A right prosperous one,' answered the captain, 'and I have made prize of a ship with one-and-forty Muslim merchants.' 'Bring them ashore,' said the King. So he landed

the merchants in irons, and Alaeddin among the rest; and the King and the captain mounted and made the captives walk before them, till they reached the palace, where the King sat down in the audience-chamber and making the prisoners pass before him, one by one, said to the first, 'O Muslim, whence comest thou?' 'From Alexandria,' answered he; whereupon the King said, 'O headsman, put him to death.' So the headsman smote him with the sword and cut off his head: and thus it fared with the second and the third, till forty were dead and there remained but Alaeddin, who drank the cup of his comrades' anguish and said to himself, 'God have mercy on thee, O Alaeddin! Thou art a dead man.' Then said the King to him, 'And thou, what countryman art thou?' 'I am of Alexandria,' answered Alaeddin, and the King said, 'O headsman, strike off his head.' So the headsman raised his arm and was about to strike, when an old woman of venerable aspect presented herself before the King, who rose to do her honour, and said to him, 'O King, did I not bid thee remember, when the captain came back with captives, to keep one or two for the convent, to serve in the church?' 'O my mother,' answered the King, 'would thou hadst come a while earlier! But take this one that is left.' So she turned to Alaeddin and said to him, 'Wilt thou serve in the church, or shall I let the King kill thee?' Quoth he, 'I will serve in the church.' So she took him and carried him forth of the palace to the church, where he said to her, 'What service must I do?' And she answered, 'Thou must arise in the morning and take five mules and go with them to the forest and there cut dry firewood and split it and bring it to the convent-kitchen. Then must thou take up the carpets and sweep and wipe the stone and marble pavements and lay the carpets down again, as they were; after which thou must take two bushels and a half of wheat and sift it and grind it and knead it and make it

into cracknels for the convent ; and thou must take also a bushel of lentils and sift and crush and cook them. Then must thou fetch water in barrels and fill the four fountains ; after which thou must take three hundred and threescore and six wooden platters and crumble the cracknels therein and pour of the lentil pottage over each and carry every monk and patriarch his platter.' 'Take me back to the King and let him kill me,' said Alaeddin ; 'it were easier to me than this service.' 'If thou do the service that is due from thee,' replied the old woman, 'thou shalt escape death ; but, if thou do it not, I will let the King kill thee.' Then she went away, leaving Alaeddin heavy at heart. Now there were in the church ten blind cripples, and one of them said to him, 'Bring me a pot.' So he brought it him and he did his occasion therein and said, 'Throw away the ordure.' He did so, and the blind man said, 'The Messiah's blessing be upon thee, O servant of the church !' Presently, the old woman came in and said to him, 'Why hast thou not done thy service ?' 'How many hands have I,' answered he, 'that I should suffice for all this work ?' 'Thou fool !' rejoined she. 'I brought thee not hither but to work. But,' added she, giving him a wand of brass with a cross at the top, 'take this rod and go forth into the highway, and whomsoever thou meetest, were he governor of the city, say to him, "I summon thee to the service of the church, in the name of the Messiah." And he will not refuse thee. Then make him sift the wheat and grind it and bolt it and knead it and bake it into cracknels ; and if any gainsay thee, beat him and fear none.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and did as she said, pressing great and small into his service ; nor did he leave to do thus for the space of seventeen years, till, one day, the old woman came to him, as he sat in the church, and said to him, 'Go forth of the convent.' 'Whither shall I go ?' asked he, and she said, 'Thou

canst pass the night in a tavern or with one of thy friends.' Quoth he, 'Why dost thou send me forth of the church?' and she replied, 'The princess Husn Meryem, daughter of Youhenna, King of the city, purposes this night to pay a visit to the church, and it befits not that any abide in her way.' So he rose and made a show of obeying her and of leaving the church; but he said in himself, 'I wonder whether the princess is like our women or fairer than they! Algate, I will not go till I have had a sight of her.' So he hid himself in a closet<sup>1</sup> with a window looking into the church, and as he watched, in came the King's daughter. He cast one glance at her, that cost him a thousand sighs, for she was like the full moon, Night  
celestial. when it emerges from the clouds; and with her was a damsel, to whom he heard her say, 'O Zubeideh, thy company is grateful to me.' So he looked straitly at the damsel and found her to be none other than his wife, Zubeideh the Lutanist, whom he thought dead. Then the princess said to Zubeideh, 'Play us an air on the lute.' But she answered, 'I will make no music for thee, till thou grant my wish and fulfil thy promise to me.' 'And what did I promise thee?' asked the princess. 'That thou wouldst reunite me with my husband Alaeddin Abou esh Shamat,' said Zubeideh. 'O Zubeideh,' rejoined the princess, 'be of good cheer and play us an air, as a thank-offering for reunion with thy husband.' 'Where is he?' asked Zubeideh, and Meryem replied, 'He is in yonder closet, listening to us.' So Zubeideh played a measure on the lute, that would have made a rock dance; which when Alaeddin heard, his entrails were troubled and he came forth and throwing himself upon his wife, strained her to his bosom. She also knew him and they embraced and fell down in a swoon. Then came the princess and sprinkled rose-water on them, till they revived, when she said to

<sup>1</sup> Confessional?



them, 'God hath reunited you.' 'By thy kind offices, O my lady,' replied Alaeddin and turning to his wife, said to her, 'O Zubeideh, thou didst surely die and we buried thee: how then camest thou to life and to this place?' 'O my lord,' answered she, 'I did not die; but a Marid of the Jinn snatched me up and flew with me hither. She whom thou buriedst was a Jinniyeh, who took my shape and feigned herself dead, but presently broke open the tomb and returned to the service of this her mistress, the princess Husn Meryem. As for me, I was in a trance, and when I opened my eyes, I found myself with the princess; so I said to her, "Why hast thou brought me hither?" "O Zubeideh," answered she, "know that I am predestined to marry thy husband Alaeddin Abou esh Shammat: wilt thou then accept of me to fellow-wife, a night for me and a night for thee?" "I hear and obey, O my lady," rejoined I; "but where is my husband?" Quoth she, "Upon his forehead is written what God hath decreed to him; as soon as what is there written is fulfilled to him he must needs come hither, and we will beguile the time of our separation from him with songs and smiting upon instruments of music, till it please God to unite us with him." So I abode with her till God brought us together in this church.' Then the princess turned to him and said, 'O my lord Alaeddin, wilt thou accept of me to wife?' 'O my lady,' replied he, 'I am a Muslim and thou art a Nazarene; so how can I marry thee?' 'God forbid,' rejoined she, 'that I should be an infidel! Nay, I am a Muslim; these eighteen years have I held fast the Faith of Submission and I am pure of any faith other than that of Islam.' Then said he, 'O my lady, I would fain return to my native land.' And she answered, 'Know that I see written on thy forehead things that thou must needs fulfil, and thou shalt come to thy desire. Moreover, I give thee the glad tidings, O Alaeddin, that there hath been

born to thee a son named Aslan, who is now eighteen years old and sitteth in thy place with the Khalif. Know also that God hath shown forth the truth and done away the false by withdrawing the curtain of secrecy from him who stole the Khalif's goods, that is, Ahmed Kemakim the arch-thief and traitor; and he now lies bound and in prison. It was I who caused the jewel to be put in the bag where thou foundest it and who sent the captain to thee; for thou must know that he is enamoured of me and seeketh my favours, but I refused to yield to his wishes, till he should bring me the jewel and its owner. So I gave him a hundred purses<sup>1</sup> and despatched him to thee, in the habit of a merchant; and it was I also who sent the old woman to save thee from being put to death with the other captives.' 'May God requite thee for us with all good!' said he. 'Indeed, thou hast done well.' Then she renewed her profession of the Mohammedan faith at his hands, and when he was assured of the truth of her speech, he said to her, 'O my lady, tell me what are the virtues of the jewel and whence cometh it?' 'It came from an enchanted treasure,' answered she, 'and has five virtues, that will profit us in time of need. The princess my grandmother, my father's mother, was an enchantress and skilled in solving mysteries and winning at hidden treasures, and from one of the latter came the jewel into her hands. When I grew up and reached the age of fourteen, I read the Evangel and other books and found the name of Mohammed (whom God bless and preserve) in four books, the Evangel, the Pentateuch, the Psalms<sup>2</sup> and the Koran; so I believed in Mohammed and became a Muslim, being assured that none is worship-worthy save God the Most

<sup>1</sup> £500.

<sup>2</sup> The Mohammedans accuse the Jews, as well as the Christians, of falsifying their sacred books, so as to suppress the mention of Mohammed.

High and that to the Lord of all creatures no faith is acceptable save that of Submission. When my grandmother fell sick, she gave me the jewel and taught me its virtues. Moreover, before she died, my father said to her, "Draw me a geomantic figure and see the issue of my affair and what will befall me." And she foretold him that he should die by the hand of a captive from Alexandria. So he swore to kill every captive from that place and told the captain of this, saying, "Do thou fall on the ships of the Muslims and seize them and whomsoever thou findest of Alexandria, kill him or bring him to me." The captain did his bidding and he slew as many in number as the hairs of his head. Then my grandmother died and I took a geomantic tablet, being minded to know whom I should marry, and drawing a figure, found that none should be my husband save one called Alaeddin Abou esh Shamât, the Trusty and Well-beloved. At this I marvelled and waited till the times were accomplished and I foregathered with thee.' So Alaeddin took her to wife and said to her, 'I desire to return to my own country.' 'If it be so,' replied she, 'come with me.' Then she carried him into the palace and hiding him in a closet there, went in to her father, who said to her, 'O my daughter, my heart is exceeding heavy to-day; let us sit down and make merry with wine, thou and I.' So he called for a table of wine, and she sat down with him and plied him with wine, till he lost his wits, when she drugged a cup with henbane, and he drank it off and fell backward. Then she brought Alaeddin out of the closet and said to him, 'Come; thine enemy is laid prostrate, for I made him drunk and drugged him; so do thou with him as thou wilt.' Accordingly Alaeddin went to the King and finding him lying drugged and helpless, bound him fast, hand and foot. Then he gave him the counter-drug and he came to himself and finding his daughter and Alaeddin sitting on his breast,

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said to her, 'O my daughter, dost thou deal thus with me?' 'If I be indeed thy daughter,' answered she, 'become a Muslim, even as I have done; for the truth was shown to me, and I embraced it, and the false, and I renounced it. I have submitted myself unto God, the Lord of all creatures, and am pure of all faiths contrary to that of Islam in this world and the next. Wherefore, if thou wilt become a Muslim, well and good; if not, thy death were better than thy life.' Alaeddin also exhorted him to embrace the true faith; but he refused and was obstinate: so Alaeddin took a dagger and cut his throat from ear to ear. Then he wrote a scroll, setting forth what had happened and laid it on the dead man's forehead, after which they took what was light of weight and heavy of worth and returned to the church. Here the princess took out the jewel and rubbed the face whereon was figured a couch, whereupon a couch appeared before her and she mounted upon it with Alaeddin and Zubeideh, saying, 'O couch, I conjure thee by the virtue of the names and talismans and characters of art engraven on this jewel, rise up with us!' And it rose with them into the air and flew, till it came to a desert valley, when the princess turned the face on which the couch was figured towards the earth, and it sank with them to the ground. Then she turned up the face whereon was figured a pavilion and tapping it, said, 'Let a pavilion be pitched in this valley.' And immediately there appeared a pavilion, in which they seated themselves. Now this valley was a desert waste, without grass or water; so she turned a third face of the jewel towards the sky and said, 'By the virtue of the names of God, let trees spring up here and a river run beside them!' And immediately trees sprang up and a river ran rippling and plashing beside them. They made their ablutions and prayed and drank of the stream; after which the princess turned up

a fourth face of the jewel, on which was figured a table of food, and said, 'By the virtue of the names of God, let the table be spread!' And immediately there appeared before them a table, spread with all manner rich meats, and they ate and drank and made merry.

Meanwhile, the King's son went in to waken his father, but found him slain and seeing the scroll, took it and read. Then he sought his sister and finding her not, betook himself to the old woman in the church, of whom he enquired for her, but she said, 'I have not seen her since yesterday.' So he returned to the troops and cried out, saying, 'To horse, cavaliers!' Then he told them what had happened, and they mounted and rode after the fugitives, till they drew near the pavilion. Presently, Husn Meryem looked up and saw a cloud of dust, which spread till it covered the prospect, then lifted and discovered her brother and his troops, crying aloud and saying, 'Whither will ye fly, and we on your track!' Then said she to Alaeddin, 'Art thou steadfast in battle?' 'Even as the stake in bran,' answered he; 'I know not war nor battle, neither swords nor spears.' So she pulled out the jewel and rubbed the fifth face, that on which were depicted a horse and his rider, and straightway a horseman appeared out of the desert and driving at the pursuing host, ceased not to do battle with them and smite them with the sword, till he routed them and put them to flight. Then said the princess to Alaeddin, 'Wilt thou go to Cairo or to Alexandria?' And he answered 'To Alexandria.' So they mounted the couch and she pronounced over it the conjuration, whereupon it set off with them and brought them to Alexandria in the twinkling of an eye. They alighted without the city and Alaeddin hid the women in a cavern, whilst he went into Alexandria and fetched them veils and outer clothing, wherewith he covered them. Then he carried them to his shop and leaving them in the room behind it,

went forth to fetch them the morning meal, when he met Ahmed ed Denef coming from Baghdad. He saw him in the street and received him with open arms, embracing him and welcoming him. Ed Denef gave him the good news of his son Aslan and how he was now come to the age of twenty; and Alaeddin, in his turn, told the captain of the guard all that had befallen him, whereat he marvelled exceedingly. Then he brought him to his lodging, where they passed the night; and next day he sold his shop and laid its price with his other monies. Now Ed Denef had told him that the Khalif sought him; but he said, 'I am bound first for Cairo, to salute my father and mother and the people of my house.' So they all mounted the couch and it carried them to Cairo the Happy, where they alighted in the street called Yellow, where stood Shemseddin's house. Alaeddin knocked at the door, and his mother said, 'Who is at the door, now that we have lost our beloved?' 'It is I, Alaeddin,' replied he; whereupon they came down and embraced him. Then he sent his wives and baggage into the house and entering himself with Ahmed ed Denef, rested there three days, after which he was minded to set out for Baghdad and his father said, 'O my son, abide with me.' But he answered, 'I cannot brook to be parted from my son Aslan.' So he took his father and mother and set out for Baghdad. When they came thither, Ahmed ed Denef went in to the Khalif and gave him the glad tidings of Alaeddin's arrival and told him his story; whereupon the Prince went forth to meet him, accompanied by his son Aslan, and they met and embraced each other. Then the Khalif sent for Ahmed Kemakim and said to Alaeddin, 'Up and avenge thee of thine enemy!' So he drew his sword and smote off Ahmed's head. Then the Khalif held festival for Alaeddin and summoning the Cadis and the witnesses, married him to the princess Husn Meryem; and he went in to her and found



her an unpierced pearl. Moreover, the Khalif made Aslan Chief of the Sixty and bestowed upon him and his father sumptuous dresses of honour; and they abode in the enjoyment of all the comforts and pleasures of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

### HATIM ET TAÏ: HIS GENEROSITY AFTER DEATH.

It is told of Hatim et Taï,<sup>1</sup> that when he died, they buried him on the top of a mountain and set over his grave two troughs hewn out of two rocks and stone figures of women with dishevelled hair. At the foot of the hill was a stream of running water, and when wayfarers camped there, they heard loud crying in the night, from dark till daybreak; but when they arose in the morning, they found nothing but the girls carved in stone. Now when Dhoulkeraa, King of Himyer, going forth of his tribe, came to the valley, he halted to pass the night there and drawing near the mountain, heard the crying and said, 'What lamenting Night  
cclxx. is that on yonder hill?' They answered him, saying, 'This is the tomb of Hatim et Taï, over which are two troughs of stone and stone figures of girls with dishevelled hair; and all who camp in this place by night hear this crying and lamenting.' So he said jestingly, 'O Hatim et Taï, we are thy guests this night, and we are lank with hunger.' Then sleep overcame him, but presently he awoke in affright and cried out, saying, 'Help, O Arabs! Look at my beast!' So they came to him and finding his she-camel struggling in the death-agony, slaughtered it and roasted its flesh and

<sup>1</sup> A very famous Arab chieftain of the latter part of the sixth century, especially renowned for the extravagance with which he practised the patriarchal virtues of generosity and hospitality. He died a few years after Mohammed's birth.

ate. Then they asked him what had happened and he said, 'When I closed my eyes, I saw in my sleep Hatim et Taï, who came to me with a sword in his hand and said to me, "Thou comest to us and we have nothing by us." Then he smote my she-camel with his sword, and she would have died, though ye had not come to her and cut her throat.' Next morning the prince mounted the beast of one of his companions and taking the latter up behind him, set out and fared on till midday, when they saw a man coming towards them, mounted on a camel and leading another, and said to him, 'Who art thou?' 'I am Adi, son of Hatim et Taï,' answered he. 'Where is Dhoulkeraa, prince of Himyer?' 'This is he,' replied they, and he said to the prince, 'Take this camel in place of thine own, which my father slaughtered for thee.' 'Who told thee of this?' asked Dhoulkeraa, and Adi answered, 'My father appeared to me in a dream last night and said to me, "Harkye, Adi; Dhoulkeraa, King of Himyer, sought hospitality of me and I, having nought to give him, slaughtered him his she-camel, that he might eat: so do thou carry him a she-camel to ride, for I have nothing."' And Dhoulkeraa took her, marvelling at the generosity of Hatim et Taï, alive and dead.

### MAAN BEN ZAÏDEH AND THE THREE GIRLS.

It is told of Maan ben Zaïdeh<sup>1</sup> that, being out one day a-hunting, he became athirst and would have drunk, but his men had no water with them. Presently, he met three **Night** damsels, bearing three skins of water; so he begged drink **ccxxi.** of them, and they gave him to drink. Then he sought of

<sup>1</sup> Another famous Oriental type of generosity. He was a celebrated soldier and statesman of the eighth century and stood in high favour with the Omniade Khalifs, as also (after the change of dynasty) with those of the house of Abbas.

his men somewhat to give the damsels ; but they had no money ; so he gave each girl ten golden-headed arrows from his quiver. Whereupon quoth one of them to her mates, ' Harkye ! These fashions pertain to none but Maan ben Zaïdeh ; so let each of us recite somewhat of verse in his praise.' Then said the first :

He heads his shafts with gold and shooting at his foes, Dispenses thus largesse and bounties far and wide,  
Giving the wounded man wherewith to get him cure And grave-clothes unto him must in the tombs abide.

And the second :

A warrior, for the great excess of his magnificence, Both friends and foes enjoy the goods his liberal hands dispense.  
His arrowheads are forged of gold, that so his very wars May not estop his generous soul from its munificence.

And the third :

With arrows he shoots at his foes, of his generosity, Whose heads are fashioned and forged of virgin gold, in steel's room ;  
That those whom he wounds may spend the price of the gold for their cure And those that are slain of his shafts may buy them the wede of the tomb.

### MAAN BEN ZAÏDEH AND THE BEDOUIN.

It is told also of Maan ben Zaïdeh that he went forth one day to the chase with his company, and they came upon a herd of gazelles. So they separated in pursuit of them and Maan was left alone in chase of one of the gazelles. When he had made prize of it, he alighted and slaughtered it ; and as he was thus engaged, he espied a man coming towards him on an ass. So he remounted and riding up to the new-comer, saluted him and asked him whence he came. Quoth he, ' I come from the land of Cuzaäh, where we have had a two years' dearth ; but this year it was a season of plenty and I sowed cucumbers. They came up

before their time, so I gathered the best of them and set out to carry them to the Amir Maan ben Zaïdeh, because of his well-known generosity and notorious munificence.' 'How much dost thou hope to get of him?' asked Maan, and the Bedouin answered, 'A thousand dinars.' 'What if he say, "This is too much"?' quoth Maan. 'Then I will ask five hundred dinars,' said the Bedouin. 'And if he say, "Too much"?' said Maan. 'Then three hundred,' replied the other. 'And if he say yet, "Too much"?' 'Then two hundred.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then one hundred.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then fifty.' 'And yet, "Too much"?' 'Then thirty.' 'And if he still say, "Too much"?' said Maan ben Zaïdeh. 'Then,' answered the Bedouin, 'I will make my ass set his feet in his sanctuary<sup>1</sup> and return to my people, disappointed and empty-handed.' Maan laughed at him and spurring his horse, rode on till he came up with his suite and returned home, when he said to his chamberlain, 'If there come a man with cucumbers, riding on an ass, admit him.' Presently up came the Bedouin and was admitted to Maan's presence, but knew him not for the man he had met in the desert, by reason of the gravity and majesty of his aspect and the multitude of his servants and attendants, for he was seated on his chair of estate, with his officers about him. So he saluted him and Maan said to him, 'O brother of the Arabs, what brings thee?' 'I hoped in the Amir,' answered the Bedouin, 'and have brought him cucumbers out of season.' 'And how much dost thou expect of us?' asked Maan. 'A thousand dinars,' answered the Bedouin. 'Too much,' said Maan. Quoth the Bedouin, 'Five hundred;' but Maan repeated, 'Too much.' 'Then three

<sup>1</sup> Apparently meaning the upper part of the carpet whereon the Amir's chair was set. It is the place of honour and has a peculiar sanctity among the Arabs, it being a breach of good manners to tread upon it (or indeed upon any part of the carpet) with shodden feet.



hundred,' said the Bedouin. 'Too much,' said Maan. 'Two hundred.' 'Too much.' 'One hundred.' 'Too much.' 'Fifty.' 'Too much.' At last the Bedouin came down to thirty dinars; but Maan still replied, 'Too much.' 'By Allah,' cried the Bedouin, 'the man I met in the desert brought me ill luck! But I will not go lower than thirty dinars.' The Amir laughed and said nothing; whereupon the Bedouin knew that it was he whom he had met and said, 'O my lord, except thou bring the thirty dinars, there is the ass tied ready at the door and here sits Maan.' At this, Maan laughed, till he fell backward, and calling his steward, said to him, 'Give him a thousand dinars and five hundred and three hundred and two hundred and one hundred and fifty and thirty and leave the ass where he is.' So the Bedouin, to his amazement, received two thousand and nine score dinars, and may God have mercy on them both!

### THE CITY OF LEBTAIT.

There was once a city in the land of the Franks, called the City of Lebtait.<sup>1</sup> It was a royal city and in it stood a tower which was always shut. Whenever a King died and another King of the Franks took the Kingship after him, he set a new and strong lock on the tower, till there were four-and-twenty locks upon the gate. After this time, there came to the throne a man who was not of the old royal house, and he had a mind to open the locks, that he might see what was within the tower. The grandees of his kingdom forbade him from this and were instant with Night him to desist, offering him all that their hands possessed  
cclxxii. of riches and things of price, if he would but forego his desire; but he would not be baulked and said, 'Needs must I open this tower.' So he did off the locks and entering,

<sup>1</sup> Apparently Toledo.

found within figures of Arabs on their horses and camels, covered with turbans with hanging ends, girt with swords and bearing long lances in their hands. He found there also a scroll, with these words written therein: 'Whenas this door is opened, a people of the Arabs, after the likeness of the figures here depicted, will conquer this country; wherefore beware, beware of opening it.' Now this city was in Spain, and that very year Tarik ibn Ziyad conquered it, in the Khalifate of Welid ben Abdulmelik<sup>1</sup> of the sons of Umeyyeh, slaying this King after the sorriest fashion and sacking the city and making prisoners of the women and boys therein. Moreover, he found there immense treasures; amongst the rest more than a hundred and seventy crowns of pearls and rubies and other gems, and a saloon, in which horsemen might tilt with spears, full of vessels of gold and silver, such as no description can comprise. Moreover, he found there also the table of food of the prophet of God, Solomon son of David (on whom be peace), which is extant even now in a city of the Greeks; it is told that it was of green emerald, with vessels of gold and platters of chrysolite; likewise, the Psalms written in the [ancient] Greek character, on leaves of gold set with jewels, together with a book setting forth the properties of stones and herbs and minerals, as well as the use of charms and talismans and the canons of the art of alchemy, and another that treated of the art of cutting and setting rubies and other [precious] stones and of the preparation of poisons and antidotes. There found he also a representation of the configuration of the earth and the seas and the different towns and countries and villages of the world and a great hall full of hermetic powder, one drachm of which would turn a thousand drachms of silver into fine gold; likewise a marvellous great round mirror of mixed metals, made for Solomon son of David (on whom be peace),

<sup>1</sup> Sixth Khalif of the Ommiade dynasty, A.D. 705-716.

wherein whoso looked might see the very image and presentment of the seven divisions of the world, and a chamber full of carbuncles, such as no words can suffice to set forth, many camel-loads. So he despatched all these things to Welid ben Abdulmelik, and the Arabs spread all over the cities of Spain, which is one of the finest of lands. This is the end of the story of the City of Lebtait.

#### THE KHALIF HISHAM AND THE ARAB YOUTH.

The Khalif Hisham ben Abdulmelik ben Merwan was hunting one day, when he sighted an antelope and pursued it with his dogs. As he was following the chase, he saw an Arab youth pasturing sheep and said to him, 'Ho, boy, up and stop yonder antelope, for it escapeth me!' The youth raised his head and replied, 'O ignorant of the worth of the worthy,<sup>1</sup> thou lookest on me with disdain and speakest to me with contempt; thy speech is that of a tyrant and thy conduct that of an ass.' 'Out on thee,' cried Hisham. 'Dost thou not know me?' 'Verily,' rejoined the youth, 'thine unmannerliness hath made thee known to me, in that thou spokest to me, without beginning by the salutation.'<sup>2</sup> 'Out on thee!' repeated the Khalif. 'I am Hisham ben Abdulmelik.' 'May God not favour thy dwellings,' replied the Arab, 'nor guard thine abiding-place! How many are thy words and how few thy generousities!' Hardly had he spoken, when up came the troops from all sides and surrounded him, saying, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!' Quoth Hisham, 'Leave this talk and seize me yonder boy.' So they laid hands on him; and when he saw the multitude

<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps "of that which is due to men of worth."

<sup>2</sup> It is the invariable custom (and indeed the duty) of every Muslim to salute his co-religionist with the words "Peace be on thee!" upon first accosting him.

of chamberlains and viziers and officers of state, he was in nowise concerned and questioned not of them, but let his chin fall on his breast and looked where his feet fell, till they brought him to the Khalif,<sup>1</sup> when he stood before him, with head bowed down, and saluted him not neither spoke. So one of the attendants said to him, 'O dog of the Arabs, what ails thee that thou salutest not the Commander of the Faithful?' The youth turned to him angrily and replied, 'O packsaddle of an ass, the length of the way it was that hindered me from this and the steepness of the steps and sweat.' Then said Hisham (and indeed he was exceeding wroth), 'O boy, thou art come to thy last hour; thy hope is gone from thee and thy life is past.' 'By Allah, O Hisham,' answered the Arab, 'if the time<sup>2</sup> be prolonged and its cutting short be not ordained of destiny, thy words irk me not, be they much or little.' Then said the (chief) chamberlain to him, 'O vilest of the Arabs, what art thou to bandy words with the Commander of the Faithful?' He answered promptly, 'Mayest thou meet with adversity and may woe and mourning never depart from thee! Hast thou not heard the saying of God the Most High? "One day, every soul shall come to give an account of itself."'<sup>3</sup> At this, Hisham rose, in great wrath, and said, 'O headsman, bring me his head; for indeed he multiplies talk, such as passes conception, and fears not reproach.' So the headsman took him and making him kneel on the carpet of blood, drew his sword and said to the Khalif, 'O Commander of the Faithful, shall I smite off the head of this thy misguided slave, who is on the way to his grave, and be quit of his blood?' 'Yes,' replied Hisham. He repeated his question and the Khalif again replied in the affirmative. Then he asked leave a third time, and the youth, knowing that,

<sup>1</sup> He having then returned to his palace.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.* of life.

<sup>3</sup> *Lit.* to dispute about or defend itself, *Koran* xvi. 112.



if the Khalif assented yet once more, it would be the signal of his death, laughed till his wang-teeth appeared; at which Hisham's wrath redoubled and he said to him, 'O boy, meseems thou art mad; seest thou not that thou art about to depart the world? Why then dost thou laugh in mockery of thyself?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the young Arab, 'if my life is to be prolonged, none can hurt me, great or small; but I have bethought me of some verses, which do thou hear, for my death cannot escape thee.' 'Say on and be brief,' replied Hisham; so the Arab repeated the following verses:

A hawk once seized a sparrow, so have I heard men say, A sparrow of the desert, that fate to him did throw;  
 And as the hawk was flying to nestward with his prize, The sparrow in his clutches did thus bespeak his foe:  
 "There's nought in me the stomach of such as thou to stay; Indeed, I'm all too paltry to fill thy maw, I trow."  
 The hawk was pleased and flattered with pride and self-conceit; He smiled for self-contentment and let the sparrow go.

At this Hisham smiled and said, 'By my kinship to the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), had he spoken thus at first, I had given him all he asked, except the Khalifate!' Then he bade his servants stuff his mouth with jewels and entreat him courteously; so they did as he bade them and the Arab went his way.

#### IBRAHIM BEN EL MEHDI AND THE BARBER-SURGEON.

When the Khalifate fell to El Mamoun the son of Haroun er Reshid, the latter's brother Ibrahim, son of El Mehdi, refused to acknowledge his nephew and betook himself to Er Reï,<sup>1</sup> where he proclaimed himself Khalif and abode

<sup>1</sup> The *Rages* of the Apocrypha; a great city of Persia, formerly its capital, but now a mere heap of ruins in the neighbourhood of Teheran.

thus a year and eleven months and twelve days. Meanwhile Mamoun remained awaiting his return to allegiance, till, at last, despairing of this, he mounted with his horsemen and footmen and repaired to Er Reï in quest of him. When the news came to Ibrahim, he found nothing for it but to flee to Baghdad and hide there, fearing for his life; and Mamoun set a price of a hundred thousand dinars upon his head.

(Quoth Ibrahim) 'Now when I heard of this price being set upon my head, I feared for myself and knew not what to do: so I disguised myself and went forth of my house at midday, knowing not whither I should go. Presently, I entered a street that had no issue and said in myself, "Verily, we are God's and to Him we return! I have exposed myself to destruction. If I retrace my steps, I shall arouse suspicion." Then I espied, at the upper end of the street, a negro standing at his door; so I went up to him and said to him, "Hast thou a place where I may abide awhile of the day?" "Yes," answered he, and opening the door, admitted me into a decent house, furnished with carpets and mats and cushions of leather. Then he shut the door on me and went away; and I misdoubted me he had heard of the reward offered for me and said in myself, "He has gone to inform against me." But, as I sat pondering my case and boiling like the pot over the fire, my host came back, followed by a porter loaded with meat and bread and new cooking-pots and goblets and a new jar and other needful gear. He took them from the porter and dismissing him, said to me, "I make myself thy ransom! I am a barber-surgeon, and I know it would mislike thee to eat with me, because of the way in which I get my living; so do thou shift for thyself with these things whereon no hand hath fallen." Now I was anhungred; so I cooked me a pot of meat, whose like I mind me not ever to have eaten; and when I had done my desire, he

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said to me, "O my lord, God make me thy ransom! Art thou for wine? Indeed, it gladdens the soul and does away care." "I have no objection," replied I, being desirous of his company; so he brought me new flagons of glass, that no hand had touched, and a jar of excellent wine, and said to me, "Mix for thyself, to thy liking." So I cleared the wine and mixed myself a most pleasant draught. Then he brought me a new cup and fruits and flowers in new vessels of earthenware; after which he said to me, "Wilt thou give me leave to sit apart and drink of wine of my own by myself, of my joy in thee and for thee?" "Do so," answered I. So we drank, he and I, till the wine began to take effect upon us, when he rose and going to a closet, took out a lute of polished wood and said to me, "O my lord, it is not for the like of me to ask thee to sing, but it behoves thine exceeding generosity to render my respect its due; so, an thou see fit to honour thy slave, thine is the august decision." Quoth I (and indeed I thought not that he knew me), "How knowest thou that I excel in song?" "Glory be to God!" answered he. "Our lord is too well renowned for that!"<sup>1</sup> Thou art my lord Ibrahim, son of El Mehdi, our Khalif of yesterday, he on whose head Mamoun hath set a price of a hundred thousand dinars: but thou art in safety with me." When I heard him say this, he was magnified in my eyes and his loyalty was certified to me; so I complied with his wish and took the lute and tuned it. Then I bethought me of my severance from my children and my family and sang the following verses:

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim ben El Mehdi was one of the most celebrated musicians and wits of his day. "He was a man of great merit and a perfect scholar, possessed of an open heart and a generous hand; his like had never before been seen among the sons of the Khalifs, none of whom spoke with more propriety and elegance or composed verses with greater ability." (Ibn Khellikan.)

It may be that He, who restored his folk to Joseph of old And raised  
him to high estate from the prison where in bonds he lay,  
Will hear our prayer and unite us ; for Allah, the Lord of the worlds,  
All-powerful is, and His puissance knows neither let nor stay.

When the barber heard this, exceeding delight took  
possession of him and he was of great good cheer ; (for it  
is said that when Ibrahim's neighbours heard him [but]  
say, "Ho, boy, saddle the mule!" they were filled with  
delight). Then, being overborne by mirth, he said to me  
(continues Ibrahim), "O my lord, wilt thou give me leave  
to say what is come to my mind, for all I am not of the  
folk of the craft?" "Do so," answered I ; "this is of thy  
great courtesy and kindness." So he took the lute and  
sang the following verses :

Unto our loved ones we made our moan of our nights so long and drear ;  
And lo, "How short is the night with us !" quoth they we hold so  
dear.

This is because quick-coming sleep closes *their* happy eyes, But slumber  
comes not to close *our* lids, that burn with many a tear.

When the night approaches, the night so dread and drear to those that  
love, *We* are oppressed with grief ; but *they* rejoice, when the night  
draws near.

Had they but drunken our bitter cup and suffered of our dole, Then  
were their nights as ours, as long and full of heavy cheer.

"Thou hast acquitted thee rarely, O my friend," said I,  
"and hast done away from me the pangs of sorrow. Let  
me hear more trifles of thy fashion." So he sang these  
verses :

So a man's honour be unstained and free of all impair, Lo, every garment  
that he dights on him is fit and fair.

She taunted me, because, forsooth, our numbers were but few ; But I,  
"The noble," answer made, "are ever few and rare."

It irks us nought that we are few and eke our neighbour great, For all  
the neighbours of most folk are scant and mean elsewhere ;

For we're a folk, that deem not death an evil nor reproach, Albeit  
Aamir and Seloul so deem, of their despair.



The love of death that is in us brings near our ends to us, But theirs, who loathe and rail at it, are long and far to fare.

We, an it like us, give the lie to others of their speech; But, when we speak, no man on earth to gainsay us doth dare.

When I heard this, I was filled with delight and marvelled exceedingly. Then I slept and awoke not till past nightfall, when I washed my face, with a mind full of the high worth of this barber-surgeon; after which I aroused him and taking out a purse I had with me, containing a considerable sum of money, threw it to him, saying, "I commend thee to God, for I am about to go forth from thee, and beg thee to spend what is in this purse on thine occasions; and thou shalt have an abounding reward of me, when I am quit of my fear." But he returned it to me, saying, "O my lord, poor wretches like myself are of no value in thine eyes; but how, for mine own dignity's sake, can I take a price for the boon which fortune hath vouchsafed me of thy favour and company? By Allah, if thou repeat thy words and throw the purse to me again, I will kill myself." So I put the purse in my sleeve (and indeed **N**ight its weight was irksome to me) and would have gone away; **cclxxix** but when I came to the door of the house, he said to me, "O my lord, this is a safer hiding-place for thee than another, and thy keep is no burden to me; so do thou abide with me, till God grant thee relief." So I turned back, saying, "On condition that thou spend of the money, in this purse." He let me believe that he consented to this, and I abode with him some days in the utmost comfort; but, perceiving that he spent none of the contents of the purse, I revolted at the idea of abiding at his charge and thought shame to be a burden on him; so I disguised myself in women's apparel, donning walking-boots and veil, and left his house.

When I found myself in the street, I was seized with excessive fear, and going to pass the bridge, came to a

place sprinkled with water, where a trooper, who had been in my service, saw me and knowing me, cried out, saying, "This is he whom Mamoun seeks!" Then he laid hold of me, but the love of life lent me strength and I gave him a push, which threw him and his horse down in that slippery place, so that he became an example to those who will take warning and the folk hastened to him. Meanwhile, I hurried on over the bridge and entered a street, where I saw the door of a house open and a woman standing in the vestibule. So I said to her, "O my lady, have pity on me and save my life; for I am a man in fear." Quoth she, "Enter and welcome;" and carried me into an upper chamber, where she spread me a bed and brought me food, saying, "Calm thy fear, for not a soul shall know of thee." As she spoke, there came a loud knocking at the door; so she went and opened, and lo, it was my friend whom I had thrown down on the bridge, with his head bound up, the blood running down upon his clothes and without his horse. "O so and so," said she, "what hath befallen thee?" Quoth he, "I made prize of the man [whom the Khalif seeks] and he escaped from me." And told her the whole story. So she brought out tinder and applying it to his head, bound it up with a piece of rag; after which she spread him a bed and he lay sick. Then she came up to me and said, "Methinks thou art the man in question?" "I am," answered I, and she said, "Fear not: no harm shall befall thee," and redoubled in kindness to me.

I abode with her three days, at the end of which time she said to me, "I am in fear for thee, lest yonder man happen upon thee and betray thee to what thou darest; so save thyself by flight." I besought her to let me tarry till nightfall, and she said, "There is no harm in that." So, when the night came, I put on my woman's attire and taking leave of her, betook me to the house of a freed

woman, who had once been mine. When she saw me, she wept and made a show of affliction and praised God the Most High for my safety. Then she went forth, as if she would go to the market, in the interests of hospitality, and I thought no harm; but, ere long, I espied Ibrahim el Mausili<sup>1</sup> making for the house, with his servants and troopers, led by a woman whom I knew for the mistress of the house. She brought them to my hiding-place and delivered me into their hands, and I saw death face to face. They carried me, in my woman's attire, to Mamoun, who called a general council and let bring me before him. When I entered I saluted him by the title of Khalif, saying, "Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" and he replied, "May God neither give thee peace nor bless thee!" "At thy leisure, O Commander of the Faithful!" rejoined I. "It is for him in whose hand is revenge<sup>2</sup> to decree retaliation or forgiveness; but forgiveness is nigher to the fear of God, and God hath set thy forgiveness above all other, even as He hath made my sin to excel all other sin. So, if thou punish, it is of thy right, and if thou pardon, it is of thy bounty." And I repeated the following verses:

Great is my sin, in sooth, 'gainst thee, But thou art greater still, perdie.  
So take thy due of me, or else Remit it of thy clemency.  
If of the noble I've not been Indeed, yet do thou of them be.

At this he raised his head to me and I hastened to add these verses:

Indeed, I've offended full sore, But thou art disposed to forgive.  
'Twere justice to punish my crime And grace to allow me to live.

Then he bowed his head and repeated the following verses:

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim of Mosul, the greatest musician of the time, a boon-companion and special favourite of Haroun er Reshid and his son.

<sup>2</sup> *Lit.* the lord of the blood-revenge, *i.e.* the person entitled to exact the blood-wit.

Whenas a friend against me doth grievously offend And maketh me with  
 anger to choke, yet in the end,  
 I pardon his offending and take him back again Into my favour, fearing  
 to live without a friend.

When I heard this, I scented the odour of mercy, knowing his disposition to clemency. Then he turned to his son El Abbas and his brother Abou Ishac and other his chief officers there present and said to them, "What deem ye of his case?" They all counselled him to slay me, but differed as to the manner of my death. Then said he to Ahmed ibn Ali Khalid,<sup>1</sup> "And what sayst thou, O Ahmed?" "O Commander of the Faithful," answered he, "if thou put him to death, we find thy like who hath slain the like of him; but, if thou pardon him, we find not the like of thee that hath pardoned the like of him." At this Mamoun bowed his head and repeated the following verse:

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The people of my tribe, they have my brother slain; But, an I shoot,  
 my shaft reverts to me again.

And also these:

Use not thy brother with despite, Although he mingle wrong with  
 right,  
 And still be kind to him, all be With thanklessness he thee requite;  
 And if he go astray and err One day, revile thou not the wight.  
 Seest not that loved and loathed at once In every way of life unite?  
 That by the annoy of hoary hairs Embittered is long life's delight,  
 And that the bristling thorns beset The branch with pleasant fruits  
 bedight?  
 Who is it doth good deeds alone And who hath never wrought un-  
 right?  
 Prove but the age's sons, thou'lt find The most have fallen from the  
 light.

When I heard this, I uncovered my head and cried out, saying, "God is most great! By Allah, the Commander of the Faithful pardons me!" Quoth he, "No harm shall come to thee, O uncle." And I, "O Commander of the

<sup>1</sup> His Vizier.



Faithful, my offence is too great for me to attempt to extenuate it and thy pardon is too great for me to speak a word of thanks for it." And I chanted the following verses :

Sure, He, who made the virtues all, stored them in Adam's loins For  
His high-priest, the seventh prince of Abbas' royal seed !  
The hearts of all the folk are filled with reverence for thee, And thou,  
with meek and humble heart, dost keep them all and lead.  
Error-deluded as I was, against thee I rebelled, Intent on covetise alone  
and base ambitious greed ;  
Yet hast thou pardon giv'n to one, the like of whom before Was never  
pardoned, though for him no one with thee did plead,  
And on a mother's bleeding heart hadst ruth and little ones, Like to the  
desert-grouse's young, didst pity in their need.

Quoth Mamoun, "I say, like our lord Joseph (on whom and on our Prophet be peace and blessing), 'There shall be no reproach on thee this day. God will forgive thee, for He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful ones.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed, I pardon thee, O uncle, and restore thee thy goods and lands, and no harm shall befall thee." So I offered up devout prayers for him and repeated the following verses :

My wealth thou hast given me again and hast not begrudged it to me ;  
Yea, and to boot, before this, my life and my blood thou didst spare.  
So if, thine approval to win, I lavish my blood and my wealth And e'en  
to the shoe off my foot, in thy service, I strip myself bare,  
'Twere but the restoring to thee of the loans that I owe to thy grace,  
Which none might reproach thee nor blame, I trow, hadst thou  
chos'n to forbear.  
Ungrateful henceforth if I prove for the favours vouchsafed me by thee,  
Still worthier of blame than thyself of honour and reverence I were.

Then Mamoun showed me honour and favour and said to me, "O uncle, Abou Ishac and Abbas counselled me to put thee to death." "And they counselled thee right loyally, O Commander of the Faithful," answered I ; "but thou hast done after thine own nature and hast put away

<sup>1</sup> Joseph to his brethren, *Koran* xii. 92.

what I feared with what I hoped." "O uncle," rejoined he, "thou didst extinguish my rancour with the humbleness of thine excuse, and I pardon thee without making thee drink the bitterness of obligation to intercessors." Then he prostrated himself in prayer a long while, after which he raised his head and said to me, "O uncle, knowest thou why I prostrated myself?" "Haply," answered I, "thou didst this in thanksgiving to God, for that He hath given thee the mastery over thine enemy." "Not so," rejoined he, "but to thank Him for having inspired me to pardon thee and purified my mind towards thee. Now tell me thy story." So I told him all that had befallen me and he sent for the freed-woman, who was in her house, expecting the reward. When she came, he said to her, "What moved thee to deal thus with thy lord?" And she answered, "Lust of money." "Hast thou a child or a husband?" asked the Khalif; and she said, "No." So he bade give her a hundred blows with a whip and imprisoned her for life. Then he sent for the soldier and his wife and the barber-surgeon and asked the former what had moved him to do thus. "Lust of money," answered he; whereupon quoth the Khalif, "It befits that thou be a barber-surgeon,"<sup>1</sup> and committed him to one whom he charged to place him in a barber's shop, where he might learn the craft. But his wife he entreated with honour and lodged in his palace, saying, "This is a woman of sense and apt for matters of moment." Then said he to the barber-surgeon, "Verily, what has come to light of thy worth and generosity calls for extraordinary honour." So he commanded the trooper's house and all that was therein to be given him and bestowed on him a dress of honour and fifteen thousand dinars.'

<sup>1</sup> Playing upon the literal meaning, "blood-sucker," of the word *hejjam*, cupper or barber-surgeon.

## THE CITY OF IREM.

It is related that Abdallah ben Abou Kilabeh went forth in quest of a camel that had strayed from him ; and as he was wandering in the deserts of Yemen and Sebaa, he came upon a great city in whose midst was a vast citadel compassed about with pavilions, that rose high into the air. He made for the place, thinking to find there inhabitants, of whom he might enquire concerning his camel ; but, when he reached it, he found it deserted, without a living soul

**Night** in it. So (quoth Abdallah), 'I alighted and hobbling my  
**ccclxxvi.** she-camel, took courage and entered the city. When I came to the citadel, I found it had two vast gates, never in the world was seen their like for size and loftiness, inlaid with all manner jewels and jacinths, white and red and yellow and green. At this I marvelled greatly and entering the citadel, trembling and dazed with wonder and affright, found it long and wide, as it were a city<sup>1</sup> for bigness ; and therein were lofty storied pavilions, builded of gold and silver and inlaid with many-coloured jewels and jacinths and chrysolites and pearls. The leaves of their doors were even as those of the citadel for beauty and their floors strewn with great pearls and balls, as they were hazel-nuts, of musk and ambergris and saffron. When I came within the city and saw no human being therein, I had well-nigh swooned and died for fear. Moreover, I looked down from the summit of the towers and balconies and saw rivers running under them ; in the streets were fruit-laden trees and tall palms, and the manner of the building of the city was one brick of gold and one of silver. So I said to myself, " Doubtless this is the Paradise promised for the world to come." Then I took of the

<sup>1</sup> The Arabic word is *el Medinah*, lit. *the city*. Perhaps the narrator meant to compare the citadel to the actual city of Medina.

jewels of its gravel and the musk of its dust as much as I could bear and returned to my own country, where I told the folk what I had seen.

After awhile, the news reached Muawiyeh ben Abou Sufyan, who was then Khalif in the Hejaz; so he wrote to his lieutenant in Senaa of Yemen to send for the teller of the story and question him of the truth of the case. Accordingly the lieutenant sent for me and questioned me, and I told him what I had seen; whereupon he despatched me to Muawiyeh, to whom I repeated my story; but he would not credit it. So I brought out to him some of the pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron, in which latter there was still some sweet smell; but the pearls were grown yellow and discoloured. The Khalif wondered at this and sending for Kaab el Ahbar,<sup>1</sup> said to him, "O Kaab el Ahbar, I have sent for thee to learn the truth of a certain matter and hope that thou wilt be able to certify me thereanent." "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked Kaab, and Muawiyeh said, "Wottest thou of a city builded of gold and silver, the pillars whereof are of rubies and chrysolite and its gravel pearls and balls of musk and ambergris and saffron?" "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Kaab. "This is 'Irem of the Columns, the like of which was never made in the lands,'<sup>2</sup> and it was Sheddad son of Aad the Great that built it." Quoth the Khalif, "Tell us of its history," and Kaab said, "Aad the Great had two sons, Shedid and Sheddad. When their father died, they ruled in his stead, and there was no king of the kings of the earth but was subject to them. After awhile Shedid died and his brother Sheddad reigned over the earth alone. Now he was fond of reading in old books, and happening upon the description of the world to come and of Paradise, with its pavilions and galleries and trees and fruits and so forth, his soul moved him to build the

<sup>1</sup> A well-known theologian.

<sup>2</sup> *Korān* lxxxix. 6, 7.



like thereof in this world, after the fashion aforesaid.<sup>1</sup> Now under his hand were a hundred thousand kings, each ruling over a hundred thousand captains, commanding each a hundred thousand warriors; so he called these all before him and said to them, 'I find in old books and histories a description of Paradise, as it is to be in the next world, and I desire to build its like in this world. Go ye forth therefore to the goodliest and most spacious tract in the world and build me there a city of gold and silver, whose gravel shall be rubies and chrysolites and pearls and the columns of its vaults beryl. Fill it with palaces, whereon ye shall set galleries and balconies, and plant its lanes and thoroughfares with all manner of trees bearing ripe fruits and make rivers to run through it in channels of gold and silver.' 'How can we avail to do this thing,' answered they, 'and whence shall we get the chrysolites and rubies and pearls whereof thou speakest?' Quoth he, 'Know ye not that all the kings of the world are under my hand and that none that is therein dare gainsay my commandment?' 'Yes,' answered they; 'we know that.' 'Get ye then,' rejoined he, 'to the mines of chrysolites and rubies and gold and silver and to the pearl-fisheries and gather together all that is in the world of jewels and metals of price and leave nought; and take also for me such of these things as be in men's hands and let nothing escape you: be diligent and beware of disobedience.'

Then he wrote letters to all the [chief] kings of the world (now the number of kings then reigning [in chief] over the earth was three hundred and threescore kings)

<sup>1</sup> According to the Breslau edition, it was the prophet Houd who, being sent of God to exhort Sheddad and his people to embrace the true faith, promised them Paradise in the next world, as a reward, describing it as above. Quoth Sheddad, on hearing this description, "I will build me in this world the like of this Paradise and I have no need of that thou promisest me."

and bade them gather together all of these things that were in their subjects' hands and get them to the mines of precious stones and metals and bring forth all that was therein, even from the abysses of the seas. This they accomplished in the space of twenty years, and Sheddad then assembled from all lands and countries builders and men of art and labourers and handicraftsmen, who dispersed over the world and explored all the wastes and deserts thereof, till they came to a vast and fair open plain, clear of hills and mountains, with springs welling and rivers running, and said, 'This is even such a place as the King commanded us to find.' So they busied themselves in building the city even as Sheddad, King of the whole earth in its length and breadth, had commanded them, laying the foundations and leading the rivers therethrough in channels after the prescribed fashion. Moreover, all the Kings of the earth sent thither jewels and precious stones and pearls large and small and cornelian and gold and silver upon camels by land and in great ships over the waters, and there came to the builders' hands of all these things so great a quantity as may neither be told nor imagined. They laboured at the work three hundred years; and when they had wrought it to end, they went to King Sheddad and acquainted him therewith. Then said he, 'Depart and make thereto an impregnable citadel, rising high into the air, and round it a thousand pavilions, each builded on a thousand columns of chrysolite and ruby and vaulted with gold, that in each pavilion may dwell a Vizier.' So they returned and did this in other twenty years; after which they again presented themselves before the King and informed him of the accomplishment of his will. Then he commanded his Viziers, who were a thousand in number, and his chief officers and such of his troops and others as he put trust in, to prepare for departure and removal to Many-Columned Irem, at the stirrup of Sheddad

son of Aad, king of the world ; and he bade also such as he would of his women and of his female slaves and eunuchs make them ready for the journey. They spent twenty years in preparing for departure, at the end of **Night** which time Sheddad set out with his host, rejoicing in the **ccxxix.** attainment of his wish, and fared forward till there remained but one day's journey between him and Irem. Then God sent down on him and on the stubborn unbelievers with him a thunderblast from the heavens of His power, which destroyed them all with a mighty clamour, and neither he nor any of his company set eyes on the city. Moreover, God blotted out the road that led to the city, and it stands unchanged, in its stead, until the Resurrection Day."

Muawiyeh wondered greatly at Kaab's story and said to him, "Hath any mortal ever made his way to the city?" "Yes," answered Kaab ; "one of the companions of Mohammed (on whom be peace and salvation) reached it, doubtless after the same fashion as this man who sits here." And (quoth Es Shaabi) it is related, on the authority of learned men of Himyer of Yemen, that Sheddad was succeeded in his kingship by his son Sheddad the Less, whom he left his viceregent in Hezremout and Sebaa, when he set out for Irem. When he heard of his father's death on the road, he caused his body to be brought back to Hezremout and let hew him out a sepulchre in a cavern, where he laid the body on a throne of gold and threw over it threescore and ten robes of cloth of gold, embroidered with precious stones ; and at his head he set up a tablet of gold, on which were graven the following verses :

Take warning, thou that by long life Art duped and thinkst to live alway.  
I'm Sheddad son of Aad, a high And mighty monarch in my day ;  
Lord of the columned citadel, Great was my prowess in the fray.  
All the world's peoples feared my might And did my ordinance obey ;  
Yea, and I held the East and West And ruled them with an iron sway.

One<sup>1</sup> came to us with God's command And summoned us to the right way.

"Is there no 'scaping from this thing?" Quoth we and did his word gainsay.

Then on us fell a thunderblast From out the heaven far away,

And like the sheaves in reaping-time Midmost a field, o'erthrown we lay.

And now beneath the storied plains Of earth we wait the appointed Day.

(Quoth Eth Thaalibi also) It chanced that two men once entered this cavern and found at its upper end a stair; so they descended and came to an underground chamber, a hundred cubits long by forty wide and a hundred high. In the midst stood a throne of gold, whereon lay a man of gigantic stature, filling the whole length and breadth of the throne. He was covered with jewelry and raiment gold and silver wrought, and at his head was a tablet of gold, bearing an inscription. So they took the tablet and bore it off, together with as many bars of gold and silver and so forth as they could away with.

#### ISAAC OF MOSUL'S STORY OF THE LADY KHEDIJEH AND THE KHALIF MAMOUN.

(Quoth Isaac of Mosul<sup>2</sup>) 'I went out one night from Mamoun's presence, on my way to my house, and being taken with a need to make water, I turned aside into a by-street and stood up against a wall, fearing lest something might hurt me, if I squatted down. Presently, I espied something hanging down from one of the houses and feeling it, found that it was a great four-handled basket, covered with brocade. "There must be some reason for this," said I to myself and knew not what to think, then

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the prophet Houd (Heber).

<sup>2</sup> Son of Ibrahim el Mausili and still more famous as a musician. He was also an excellent poet and a great favourite with the Khalif Mamoun.



drunkenness led me to seat myself in the basket, whereupon the people of the house pulled me up, supposing me to be he whom they expected. When I came to the top of the wall, I found four damsels, who said to me, "Descend and welcome!" Then one of them went before me with a flambeau and brought me down into a mansion, wherein were furnished sitting-chambers, whose like I had never seen, save in the Khalif's palace. So I sat down and after awhile, the curtains were drawn from one side of the room and in came damsels bearing lighted flambeaux and censers full of Sumatran aloes-wood, and amongst them a young lady as she were the rising full moon. I rose and she said, "Welcome to thee for a visitor!" Then she made me sit down again and asked me how I came thither. Quoth I, "I was returning home from a friend's house and went astray in the dark; then, being taken with an urgent occasion, I turned aside into this street, where I found a basket let down. The wine which I had drunk led me to seat myself in it and it was drawn up with me into this house." "No harm shall befall thee," rejoined she, "and I hope thou wilt have cause to praise the issue of thine adventure. But what is thy condition?" "I am a merchant in the Baghdat bazaar," replied I, and she, "Canst thou repeat any verses?" "Some small matter," answered I. "Then," said she, "let us hear some of them." But I said, "A visitor is [naturally] bashful; do thou begin." "True," answered she and recited some of the choicest verses of the poets, past and present, so that I knew not whether more to marvel at her beauty and grace or at the charm of her diction. Then said she, "Is thy bashfulness gone?" "Yes, by Allah!" answered I. "Then, if thou wilt," rejoined she, "recite us somewhat." So I repeated to her a number of poems by old writers, and she applauded, saying, "By Allah, I did not look to find such culture among the trader folk!"

Then she called for food and fell to taking of it and setting it before me; and the place was full of all manner sweet-scented flowers and rare fruits, such as are found only in kings' houses. Presently, she called for wine and drank a cup, after which she filled another and gave it to me, saying, "Now is the time for converse and story-telling." So I bethought myself and related to her a number of pleasing stories and anecdotes, with which she was delighted and said, "It is wonderful that a merchant should have such store of tales like unto these, for they are fit for kings." Quoth I, "I have a neighbour who uses to consort with kings and bear them company at table; so, when he is at leisure, I visit his house and he often tells me what he has heard." "By my life," exclaimed she, "thou hast a good memory!"

We continued to converse thus, and as often as I was silent, she would begin, till the most part of the night was spent, whilst the burning aloes-wood diffused its fragrance and I was in such case as, if the Khalif had suspected it, would have made him wild with longing for it. Then said she to me, "Verily, thou art one of the most pleasant and accomplished of men and passing well-bred; but there lacks one thing." "What is that?" asked I, and she said, "If but thou knewest how to sing verses to the lute!" I answered, "I was once passionately fond of this art, but finding I had no gift for it, I abandoned it, though reluctantly. Indeed, I should love to sing somewhat well at this present and fulfil my night's enjoyment." "Meseemeth thou hintest a wish for the lute to be brought?" said she, and I, "It is thine to decide, if thou wilt so far favour me, and to thee be the thanks." So she called for a lute and sang a song, in a manner whose like I never heard, both for sweetness of voice and perfection of style and skill in playing, in short, for general excellence. Then said she, "Knowest thou who made the air and words of this song?,"

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Night  
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"No," answered I; and she said, "The words are so and so's and the air is Isaac's." "And hath Isaac then (may I be thy ransom!) such a talent?" asked I. "Glory be to Isaac!" replied she. "Indeed he excels in this art." "Glory be to Allah," exclaimed I, "who hath given this man what He hath vouchsafed unto none other!" And she said, "How would it be, if thou heardest this song from himself?" Thus did we till break of day, when there came to her an old woman, as she were her nurse, and said to her, "The time is come." So she rose and said to me, "Keep what hath passed between us to thyself; for meetings of this kind are in confidence." "May I be thy ransom!" answered I. "I needed no enjoinder of this." Then I took leave of her and she sent a damsel to open the door to me; so I went forth and returned to my own house, where I prayed the morning prayer and slept.

Presently, there came to me a messenger from the Khalif; so I went to him and passed the day in his company. When the night came, I called to mind my yesternight's pleasure, a thing from which none but a fool could be content to abstain, and betook myself to the street, where I found the basket, and seating myself therein, was drawn up to the place in which I had passed the previous night. When the lady saw me, she said, "Indeed, thou art assiduous." And I answered, "Meseems rather that I am neglectful." Then we fell to conversing and passed the night as before in talking and reciting verses and telling rare stories, each in turn, till daybreak, when I returned home. I prayed the morning prayer and slept, and there came to me a messenger from Mamoun. So I went to him and spent the day with him till nightfall, when he said to me, "I conjure thee to sit here, whilst I go on an occasion and come back." As soon as he was gone, my thoughts turned to the lady and calling to mind my late

delight, I recked little what might befall me from the Commander of the Faithful. So I sprang up and going out, ran to the street aforesaid, where I sat down in the basket and was drawn up as before. When the lady saw me, she said, "Verily, thou art a sincere friend to us." "Yea, by Allah!" answered I; and she said, "Hast thou made our house thine abiding-place?" "May I be thy ransom!" replied I. "A guest hath a right to three days' entertainment, and if I return after this, ye are free to shed my blood." Then we passed the night as before; and when the time of departure drew near, I bethought me that Mamoun would certainly question me nor be content save with a full explanation: so I said to her, "I see thee to be of those who delight in singing. Now I have a cousin who is handsomer than I and higher of station and more accomplished; and he is the most intimate of all God's creatures with Isaac." "Art thou a spunger?" asked she. "Verily, thou art importunate." Quoth I, "It is for thee to decide;" and she, "If thy cousin be as thou sayst, it would not displease me to make his acquaintance."

Then I left her and returned to my house, but hardly had I reached it, when the Khalif's messengers came down on me and carried me before him by main force. I found him seated on a chair, wroth with me, and he said to me, "O Isaac, art thou a traitor to thine allegiance?" "No, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful!" answered I. "What hast thou then to say?" asked he. "Tell me the truth." And I replied, "I will well; but in private." So he signed to his attendants, who withdrew to a distance, and I told him the case, adding, "I promised to bring thee to visit her." And he said, "Thou didst well." Then we spent the day in our usual pleasures, but Mamoun's heart was taken up with the lady, and hardly was the appointed time come, when we set out. As we went along, I cautioned him, saying, "Look that thou call me not by my

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name before her ; but do thou sing and I will accompany thee." He assented to this, and we fared on till we came to the house, where we found two baskets hanging ready. So we sat down in them and were drawn up to the usual place, where the damsel came forward and saluted us. When Mamoun saw her, he was amazed at her beauty and grace ; and she began to entertain him with stories and verses. Presently, she called for wine and we fell to drinking, she paying him especial attention and delighting in him and he repaying her in kind. Then he took the lute and sang an air, after which she said to me, "And is thy cousin also a merchant?" "Yes," answered I, and she said, "Indeed, ye resemble one another nearly." But when Mamoun had drunk three pints, he grew merry with wine and called out saying, "Ho, Isaac!" "At thy service, O Commander of the Faithful," answered I. Quoth he, "Sing me such an air."

As soon as the lady knew that he was the Khalif, she withdrew to another place, and when I had made an end of my song, Mamoun said to me, "See who is the master of this house ;" whereupon an old woman hastened to make answer, saying, "It belongs to Hassan ben Sehl."<sup>1</sup> "Fetch him to me," said the Khalif. So she went away and after awhile in came Hassan, to whom said Mamoun, "Hast thou a daughter?" "Yes," answered he ; "her name is Khedijeh." "Is she married?" asked the Khalif. "No, by Allah !" replied Hassan. "Then," said Mamoun, "I ask her of thee in marriage." "O Commander of the Faithful," replied Hassan, "she is thy handmaid and at thy commandment." Quoth Mamoun, "I take her to wife at a present dower of thirty thousand dinars, which thou shalt receive this very morning ; and do thou bring her to us this next night." And Hassan answered, "I hear and obey."

<sup>1</sup> Mamoun's own Vizier, a man of great wealth and munificence.

'Then he went out, and the Khalif said to me, "O Isaac, tell this story to no one." So I kept it secret till Mamoun's death. Surely never was man's life so fulfilled with delights as was mine these four days' time, whenas I companied with Mamoun by day and with Khedijeh by night; and by Allah, never saw I among men the like of Mamoun, neither among women have I ever set eyes on the like of Khedijeh, no, nor on any that came near her in wit and understanding and pleasant speech!'

#### THE SCAVENGER AND THE NOBLE LADY OF BAGHDAD.

At Mecca, one day, in the season of pilgrimage, whilst the people were making the enjoined circuits about the Holy House and the place of compassing was crowded, a man laid hold of the covering of the Kaabeh and cried out, from the bottom of his heart, saying, 'I beseech Thee, O God, that she may once again be wroth with her husband and that I may lie with her!'<sup>1</sup> A company of the pilgrims heard him and falling on him, loaded him with blows and carried him to the governor of the pilgrims, to whom said they, 'O Amir, we found this man in the Holy Places, saying thus and thus.' The governor commanded to hang him; but he said, 'O Amir, I conjure thee, by the virtue of the Prophet (whom God bless and preserve), hear my story and after do with me as thou wilt.' 'Say on,' quoth the Amir. 'Know then, O Amir,' said the man, 'that I am a scavenger, who works in the sheep-slaughterhouses and carries off the blood and the offal to the rubbish-heaps.' One day, as I went along with my ass loaded, I saw the people running away and one of them said to me, "Enter this alley, lest they kill thee." Quoth I, "What ails the folk to run away?" And he answered, "It is the eunuchs

<sup>1</sup> Without the town.

in attendance on the wife of one of the notables, who drive the people out of her way and beat them all, without distinction." So I turned aside with the ass and stood, awaiting the dispersal of the crowd. Presently up came a number of eunuchs with staves in their hands, followed by nigh thirty women, and amongst them a lady as she were a willow-wand or a thirsty gazelle, perfect in beauty and elegance and amorous grace. When she came to the mouth of the passage where I stood, she turned right and left and calling one of the eunuchs, whispered in his ear; whereupon he came up to me and laying hold of me, bound me with a rope and haled me along after him, whilst another eunuch took my ass and made off with it. I knew not what was to do and the people followed us, crying out, "This is not allowed of God! What has this poor scavenger done that he should be bound with ropes?" and saying to the eunuchs, "Have pity on him and let him go, so God have pity on you!" And I the while said in myself, "Doubtless the eunuch seized me, because his mistress smelt the offal and it sickened her. Belike she is with child or ailing; but there is no power and no virtue save in God the Most High, the Supreme!" So I walked on behind them, till they stopped at the door of a great house and entering, brought me into a great hall, I know not how I shall describe its goodliness, furnished with magnificent furniture. The women withdrew to the harem, leaving me bound with the eunuch and saying in myself, "Doubtless they will torture me here till I die, and none know of my death." However, after awhile, they carried me into an elegant bath-room, adjoining the hall; and as I sat there, in came three damsels, who seated themselves round me and said to me, "Strip off thy rags." So I pulled off my threadbare clothes, and one of them fell a-rubbing my feet, whilst another washed my head and the third scrubbed my body. When they had made an end of washing me, they brought me

a parcel of clothes and said to me, "Put these on." "By Allah," answered I, "I know not how!" So they came up to me and dressed me, laughing at me the while; after which they brought casting-bottles, full of rose-water, and sprinkled me therewith. Then I went out with them into another saloon, by Allah, I know not how to set out its goodliness, for the much paintings and furniture therein; and here I found the lady seated on a couch of Indian cane with ivory feet and before her a number of damsels. When she saw me, she rose and called to me; so I went up to her and she made me sit by her side. Then she called for food, and the damsels brought all manner rich meats, such as I never saw in all my life; I do not even know the names of the dishes. So I ate my fill and when the dishes had been taken away and we had washed our hands, she called for fruits and bade me eat of them; after which she bade one of the waiting-women bring the wine-service. So they set on flagons of divers kinds of wine and burned perfumes in all the censers, what while a damsel like the moon rose and served us with wine, to the sound of the smitten strings. We sat and drank, the lady and I, till we were warm with wine, whilst I doubted not but that all this was an illusion of sleep. Presently, she signed to one of the damsels to spread us a bed in such a place, which being done, she took me by the hand and led me thither. So I lay with her till the morning, and as often as I pressed her in my arms, I smelt the delicious fragrance of musk and other perfumes that exhaled from her and could think no otherwise but that I was in Paradise or in the mazes of a dream. When it was day, she asked me where I lodged and I told her, "In such a place;" whereupon she gave me a handkerchief gold and silver wrought, with somewhat tied in it, and bade me depart, saying, "Go to the bath with this." So I rejoiced and said to myself, "If there be but five farthings here, it will buy me the morning meal."

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Then I left her, as I were leaving Paradise, and returned to my lodging, where I opened the handkerchief and found in it fifty dinars of gold. I buried them in the ground and buying two farthings' worth of bread and meat, sat down at the door and breakfasted; after which I sat pondering my case till the time of afternoon-prayer, when a slave-girl accosted me, saying, "My mistress calls for thee." So I followed her to the house aforesaid and she carried me in to the lady, before whom I kissed the earth, and she bade me sit and called for meat and wine as on the previous day; after which I again lay with her all night. On the morrow, she gave me a second handkerchief, with other fifty dinars therein, and I took it and going home, buried this also.

Thus did I eight days running, going in to her at the hour of afternoon-prayer and leaving her at daybreak; but, on the eighth night, as I lay with her, one of her maids came running in and said to me, "Arise, go up into yonder closet." So I rose and went into the closet, which was over the gate and had a window giving upon the street in front of the house. Presently, I heard a great clamour and tramp of horse, and looking out of the window, saw a young man, as he were the rising moon on the night of her full, come riding up, attended by a number of servants and soldiers. He alighted at the door and entering, found the lady seated on the couch in the saloon. So he kissed the earth before her, then came up to her and kissed her hands; but she would not speak to him. However, he ceased not to soothe her and speak her fair, till he made

**Night** his peace with her, and they lay together that night.  
 cclxxv. Next morning, the soldiers came for him and he mounted and rode away; whereupon she came in to me and said, "Sawst thou yonder man?" "Yes," answered I; and she said, "He is my husband, and I will tell thee what befell me with him.

It chanced one day that we were sitting, he and I, in the garden within the house, when he rose from my side and was absent a long while, till I grew tired of waiting and said to myself, 'Most like, he is in the wardrobe.' So I went thither, but not finding him there, went down to the kitchen, where I saw a slave-girl, of whom I enquired for him, and she showed him to me lying with one of the cook-maids. When I saw this, I swore a great oath that I would do adultery with the foulest and filthiest man in Baghdad; and the day the eunuch laid hands on thee, I had been four days going round about the town in quest of one who should answer this description, but found none fouler nor more filthy than thee. So I took thee and there passed between us that which God fore-ordained to us; and now I am quit of my oath. But," added she, "if my husband return yet again to the cook-maid and lie with her, I will restore thee to thy late place in my favours."

When (continued the scavenger) I heard these words from her lips, what while she transfixed my heart with the arrows of her glances, my tears streamed forth, till my eyelids were sore with weeping, and I repeated the saying of the poet :

Vouchsafe me the kiss of thy left hand, I prithee, And know that it's  
worthier far than thy right;  
For 'tis but a little while since it was washing Sir reverence away from  
the stead of delight.

Then she gave me other fifty dinars (making in all four hundred dinars I had of her) and bade me depart. So I went out from her and came hither, that I might pray God (blessed and exalted be He!) to make her husband return to the cook-maid, so haply I might be again admitted to her favours.' When the governor of the pilgrims heard the man's story, he set him free and said to the bystanders, 'God on you, pray for him, for indeed he is excusable.'

## THE MOCK KHALIF.

It is related that the Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being one night troubled with a persistent restlessness, summoned his Vizier Jaafer the Barmecide and said to him, 'My heart is straitened and I have a mind to divert myself to-night by walking about the streets of Baghdad and looking into the affairs of the folk; but we will disguise ourselves as merchants, that none may know us.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer. So they rose at once and putting off the rich clothes they wore, donned merchants' habits and sallied forth, the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesrour the headsman. They walked from place to place, till they came to the Tigris and saw an old man sitting in a boat; so they went up to him and saluting him, said, 'O old man, we desire thee of thy favour to carry us a-pleasuring down the river, in this thy boat, and take this dinar to thy hire.' 'Who may go a-pleasuring on the Tigris?' replied the boatman. 'Seeing that the Khalif every night comes down the stream in his barge, and with him one crying aloud, "Ho, all ye people, great and small, gentle and simple, men and boys, whoso is found in a boat on the Tigris [by night], I will strike off his head or hang him to the mast of his boat!" And ye had well-nigh met him; for here comes his barge.' But the Khalif and Jaafer said, 'O old man, take these two dinars, and when thou seest the Khalif's barge approaching, run us under one of the arches, that we may hide there till he have passed.' 'Hand over the money,' replied the boatman; 'and on God the Most High be our dependence!' So they gave him the two dinars and embarked in the boat; and he put off and rowed about with them awhile, till they saw the barge coming down the river in mid-stream, with lighted flambeaux and cressets therein. Quoth the boat-

man, 'Did I not tell you that the Khalif passed every night? O Protector, remove not the veils of Thy protection!' So saying, he ran the boat under an arch and threw a piece of black cloth over the Khalif and his companions, who looked out from under the covering and saw, in the bows of the barge, a man holding a cresset of red gold and clad in a tunic of red satin, with a muslin turban on his head. Over one of his shoulders hung a cloak of yellow brocade, and on the other was a green silk bag full of Sumatran aloes-wood, with which he fed the cresset by way of firewood. In the stern stood another man, clad like the first and bearing a like cresset, and in the barge were two hundred white slaves, standing right and left about a throne of red gold, on which sat a handsome young man, like the moon, clad in a dress of black, embroidered with yellow gold. Before him they saw a man, as he were the Vizier Jaafer, and at his head stood an eunuch, as he were Mesrour, with a drawn sword in his hand, besides a score of boon-companions. When the Khalif saw this, he turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Belike this is one of my sons, El Amin or El Mamoun.' Then he examined the young man that sat on the throne, and finding him accomplished in beauty and grace and symmetry, said to Jaafer, 'Verily, this young man abates no jot of the state of the Khalifate! See, there stands before him one as he were thyself, O Jaafer; yonder eunuch is as he were Mesrour and those boon-companions as they were my own. By Allah, O Jaafer, my reason is ~~con~~<sup>Night</sup> confounded and I am filled with amazement at this ~~celestial~~ thing!' 'And I also, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,' replied Jaafer. Then the barge passed on and disappeared from sight; whereupon the boatman pushed out again into the stream, saying, 'Praised be God for safety, since none hath fallen in with us!' 'O old man,' said Er Reshid, 'doth the Khalif come down the



river every night?' 'Yes, O my lord,' answered the boatman; 'he hath done so every night this year past.' 'O old man,' rejoined Er Reshid, 'we wish thee of thy favour to await us here to-morrow night, and we will give thee five dinars, for we are strangers, lodging at El Khendek, and we have a mind to divert ourselves.' 'With all my heart,' replied the boatman. Then the Khalif and Jaafer and Mesroure returned to the palace, where they put off their merchants' habits and donning their apparel of state, sat down each in his several room. Then came the amirs and viziers and chamberlains and officers, and the Divan assembled as of wont.

When the night came and all the folk had dispersed and gone each his own way, the Khalif said to his Vizier, 'Come, O Jaafer, let us go and amuse ourselves by looking on the other Khalif.' At this, Jaafer and Mesroure laughed, and the three, donning merchants' habits, went out at the privy gate and made their way through the city, in great glee, till they came to the Tigris, where they found the boatman sitting, waiting for them. They embarked with him in the boat and had not sat long, before up came the mock Khalif's barge, with the cresset-bearers crying aloud as of wont, and in it two hundred white slaves other than those of the previous night. 'O Vizier,' exclaimed the Khalif, 'had I heard tell of this, I had not believed it; but I have seen it with my own eyes.' Then said he to the boatman, 'Take these ten dinars and row us along abreast of them, for they are in the light and we in the shade, and we can see them and divert ourselves by looking on them, but they cannot see us.' So he took the money and push-

**N**ight ing off, followed in the shadow of the barge, till they came  
 lxxxviii. among the gardens and the barge cast anchor before a postern door, where they saw servants standing with a mule saddled and bridled. Here the mock Khalif landed and mounting the mule, rode away with his boon-companions,

attended by his suite and preceded by the cresset-bearers crying aloud. Then Haroun and Jaafer and Mesrour landed also and making their way through the press of servants, walked on before them. Presently, the cresset-bearers espied them and seeing three strangers in merchants' habits, misdoubted of them; so they pointed them out and caused bring them before the mock Khalif, who looked at them and said, 'How come ye here at this hour?' 'O our lord,' answered they, 'we are foreign merchants, who arrived here this day and were out a-walking to-night, when ye came up and these men laid hands on us and brought us before thee.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'Since you are strangers, no harm shall befall you; but had ye been of Baghdad, I had struck off your heads.' Then he turned to his Vizier and said to him, 'Take these men with thee; for they are our guests this night.' 'I hear and obey, O our lord,' answered he; and they followed him, till they came to a lofty and splendid palace of curious ordinance, such as no king possesses, rising from the dust and laying hold upon the marges of the clouds. Its door was of teak, inlaid with glittering gold, and by it one passed into a saloon, amiddleward which was a basin of water, with an artificial fountain rising from its midst. It was furnished with carpets and cushions and divans of brocade and tables and other gear such as amazed the wit and defied description. There, also, was a curtain drawn, and upon the door were written these two verses:

**A** palace, upon it be blessing and greeting and grace! Fair fortune hath put off her beauty to brighten the place.

**Therein** are all manner of marvels and rarities found; **The penmen** are puzzled in story its charms to retrace.

The mock Khalif entered with his company and sat down on a throne of gold, set with jewels and covered with a prayer-carpet of yellow silk; whilst the boon-companions took their seats and the sword-bearer stood before him

Then the servants laid the tables and they ate and washed their hands, after which the dishes were removed and the wine-service set on, with cups and flagons in due order. The cup went round till it came to Er Reshid, who refused it, and the mock Khalif said to Jaafer, 'What ails thy friend that he drinks not?' 'O our lord,' replied the Vizier, 'this long while he hath drunk no wine.' Quoth the mock Khalif, 'I have drink other than this, a kind of apple-wine, that will suit him.' So he let bring applesherbet and said to Haroun, 'Drink thou of this, as often as it comes to thy turn.' Then they continued to drink and make merry, till the wine rose to their heads and mastered their wits; and Haroun said to Jaafer, 'O Jaafer, by Allah, we have no such vessels as these. Would God I knew what manner of man this is!' Presently, the young man glanced at them and seeing them talking privily, said, 'It is unmannerly to whisper.' 'No rudeness was meant,' answered Jaafer. 'My friend did but say to me, "Verily, I have travelled in most countries and have caroused and companied with the greatest of kings and captains; yet never saw I a goodlier ordinance than this nor passed a more delightful night; save that the people of Baghdad say, "Drink without music often leaves headache."'" When the mock Khalif heard this, he smiled merrily and struck a gong<sup>1</sup> with a rod he had in his hand; whereupon a door opened and out came an eunuch, bearing a stool of ivory, inlaid with glittering gold, and followed by a damsel of surpassing beauty and symmetry. He set down the stool and the damsel seated herself on it, as she were the sun shining in the cloudless sky. In her hand he had a lute of Indian make, which she laid in her lap and bending over it as a mother bends over her child, preluded in four-

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<sup>1</sup> *Medewwerék*, lit. "something round." This word generally means a small round cushion; but, in the present instance, a gong is evidently referred to.

and-twenty modes, amazing all wits. Then she returned to the first mode and sang the following verses to a lively measure :

The tongue of passion in my heart bespeaketh thee of me And giveth thee to know that I enamoured am of thee.

The burning of an anguished heart is witness to my pain And ulcerated eyes and tears that flow incessantly.

I had no knowledge what Love was, before the love of thee ; But God's forewritten ordinance o'ertaketh all that be.

When the mock Khalif heard this, he gave a great cry and rent his robe to the skirt, whereupon they let down a curtain over him and brought him a fresh robe, handsomer than the first. He put it on and sat as before, till the cup came round to him, when he struck the gong a second time and behold, a door opened and out came an eunuch with a chair of gold, followed by a damsel handsomer than the first, bearing a lute, such as mortified the heart of the envious. She sat down on the chair and sang to the lute these verses :

Ah, how can I be patient, when longing in my soul Flames high and from mine eyelids the tears in torrents roll ?

Life hath no sweet, by Allah, wherein I may rejoice. How shall a heart be joyous, that's all fulfilled of dole ?

No sooner did the youth hear this than he gave a great cry and rent his clothes to the skirt ; whereupon they let down the curtain over him and brought him another dress. He put it on and sitting up as before, fell again to cheerful talk, till the cup came round to him, when he smote once more upon the gong and out came an eunuch with a chair, followed by a damsel fairer than she who had foregone her. So she sat down on the chair, with a lute in her hand, and sang thereto the following verses :

Have done with your disdain and leave to make me rue ; For, by your life, my heart to you was ever true !

Have ruth on one distraught, the bondslave of your love, Sorry and sick and full of longings ever new.



Sickness, for passion's stress, hath wasted him to nought, And still for  
your consent to Allah he doth sue.

O ye full moons, whose place of sojourn is my heart, Amongst the human  
race whom can I choose but you?

At this the young man gave a great cry and rent his  
clothes, whereupon they let fall the curtain over him and  
brought him other clothes. Then he returned to his former  
case with his boon-companions and the cup went round  
as before, till it came to him, when he struck the gong a  
fourth time and the door opening, out came a boy, bearing  
a chair and followed by a damsel. He set the chair for  
her and she sat down upon it and taking the lute, tuned it  
and sang to it these verses :

When, when will separation and hatred pass away And what is past of  
joyance come back to make me gay?

But yesterday, in gladness, one dwelling held us both ; We saw the  
enviers napping, all heedless of their prey.

But fortune played the traitor with us and sundered us, And left our  
dwelling-places even as the desert grey.

Wilt have me, O my censor, be solaced for my loves? Alas, my heart  
the censor, I see, will not obey !

So make an end of chiding and leave me to my love ; For of my loved  
one's converse my heart is full alway.

Fair lords, though you've been fickle and broken faith and troth, Deem  
not my heart for absence forgets you night or day.

When the mock Khalif heard the girl's song, he gave a  
**Night** great cry and tearing his clothes as before, fell down in a  
**xxx.** swoon ; whereupon they would have let down the curtain  
over him, as of wont ; but the cords stuck fast and Er  
Reshid, chancing to look at him, saw on his body the  
marks of beating with palm-rods and said to Jaafer, 'By  
Allah, he is a handsome youth, but a foul thief!' 'Whence  
knowest thou that, O Commander of the Faithful?' asked  
Jaafer, and the Khalif answered, 'Sawst thou not the  
marks of whips on his sides?' Then they let fall the  
curtain over him and brought him a fresh dress, which he

put on and sat up as before with his courtiers. Presently, he saw the Khalif and Jaafer whispering together and said to them, 'What is the matter, gentlemen?' 'Nothing, my lord,' replied Jaafer, 'save that my friend here, who (as is not unknown to thee) is of the merchants and hath visited all the great cities and countries of the world and foregathered with kings and men of worth, saith to me, "Verily, that which our lord the Khalif hath done this night is beyond measure extravagant, never saw I any do the like of his fashion in any country; for he hath rent four dresses, each worth a thousand dinars, and this is surely excessive extravagance."' 'O man,' replied the youth, 'the money is my money and the stuff my stuff, and this is by way of largesse to my servants and followers; for each suit that is rent belongeth to one of my boon-companions here present and I appoint him, in exchange therefor, [if it so like him,] the sum of five hundred dinars.' 'Well is that thou dost, O our lord!' answered Jaafer and recited the following verses:

The virtues sure have built themselves a dwelling in thy palm; Thou hast thy wealth to all mankind made common property.

An if the virtues' doors were shut on us one luckless day, Thy hand unto their locks, indeed, were even as a key.

When the young man heard these verses, he ordered Jaafer a thousand dinars and a dress of honour. Then the cup went round among them and the wine was pleasant to them; but, after awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'Ask him of the marks on his ribs, that we may see what he will say.' 'Softly, O my lord,' replied Jaafer; 'be not hasty, for patience is more becoming.' 'By the life of my head and by the tomb of El Abbas,'<sup>1</sup> rejoined the Khalif, 'except thou ask him, I will assuredly make an end of thee!' With this the young man turned towards Jaafer and said

<sup>1</sup> The Prophet's uncle, from whom the Abbaside Khalifs were descended.

to him, 'What ails thee and thy friend to be whispering together? Tell me what is to do with you.' 'It is nothing,' replied Jaafer; but the mock Khalif rejoined, 'I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me what ails you and hide from me nothing of your case.' 'O my lord,' answered the Vizier, 'my companion here saw on thy sides the marks of beating with whips and rods and marvelled thereat exceedingly, saying, "How came the Khalif to be beaten?"' And he would fain know the cause of this.' When the youth heard this, he smiled and said, 'Know that my story is wonderful and my case extraordinary; were it graven with needles on the corners of the eye, it would serve as an admonition to him who can profit by admonition.' And he sighed and repeated the following verses:

Strange is my story and outdoes all marvels that can be. By Love itself  
 I swear, my ways are straitened upon me!  
 An ye would know my case, give ear and hearken to my tale And all  
 be dumb, on every side, in this our company.  
 Take heed unto my speech, for lo! therein a warning is; Ay, and my  
 words no leasing are, but naked verity.  
 I am a man of passion slain, the victim of desire, And she who slew me  
 fairer is than all the stars to see.  
 A bright black eye she hath, whose glance is as an Indian sword, And  
 from her eyebrows' bended bows full many a shaft shoots she.  
 My heart forebodes me that 'mongst you the Khalif of the age, Our  
 Imam<sup>1</sup> is, of high descent and noble pedigree,  
 And that the second of you he, that's known as Jaafer, is, His vizier and  
 a vizier's son, a lord of high degree.  
 Yea, and the third of you Mesrour the eunuch is, I ween, The sword-  
 man of his vengeance. So, if true my saying be,  
 I have of this my case attained to all for which I hoped And hearts'  
 content from every side is come, indeed, to me.

When they heard this, Jaafer swore to him a dissembling oath that they were not those he named; whereupon he laughed and said, 'Know, O my lords, that I am not the

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.* "fugleman," i.e. "leader of the people at prayer," a title bestowed upon the Khalifs, in recognition of their spiritual headship.

Commander of the Faithful and that I do but style myself thus, to get my will of the people of the city. My real name is Mohammed Ali son of Ali the Jeweller and my father was one of the chief men [of the city]. When he died, he left me great store of gold and silver and pearls and coral and rubies and chrysolites and other jewels, besides houses and lands and baths and gardens and orchards and shops and brickfields and slaves, male and female. One day, as I sat in my shop, surrounded by my slaves and servants, there came up a young lady, riding on a mule and attended by three damsels like moons. She alighted at my shop and seating herself by me, said to me, "Art thou Mohammed the jeweller?" "Yes," answered I, "I am he, at thy service." "Hast thou a necklace of jewels fit for me?" asked she, and I replied, "O my lady, I will show thee what I have; and if any please thee, it will be of thy slave's good luck; if not, of his ill-fortune." I had by me a hundred necklaces and showed them all to her; but none of them pleased her and she said, "I want a better than those I have seen." Now I had a small necklace, that my father had bought for a hundred thousand dinars and the like whereof was not to be found with any of the great kings; so I said to her, "O my lady, I have yet one necklace of fine stones, whose like none possesseth, great or small." "Show it me," said she. So I showed it her and she said, "This is what I sought and what I have wished for all my life. What is its price?" Quoth I, "It cost my father a hundred thousand dinars;" and she said, "I will give thee five thousand dinars to thy profit." "O my lady," answered I, "the necklace and its owner are at thy service and I cannot gainsay thee [in aught]." "Not so," rejoined she; "needs must thou have the profit, and I am still much beholden to thee." Then she rose and mounting the mule in haste, said to me, "O my lord, in God's name, favour us with thy company, to receive the



money; for this thy day is a milk-white day<sup>1</sup> with us." So I shut the shop and accompanied her, in all security, till we came to a house, on which were manifest the signs of fortune. Its door was wrought with gold and silver and lapis lazuli, and thereon were written these verses:

May mourning never enter thee, I pray, O house, nor fortune e'er thy lord bewray!

▲ goodly sojourn art thou to the guest, When strait on him is every place and way.

She dismounted and entered the house, bidding me sit down on the stone bench at the door, till the money-changer should come. So I sat awhile, till presently a damsel came out to me and said, "O my lord, enter the vestibule; for it is not seemly that thou shouldst sit at the door." Accordingly, I entered the vestibule and sat down on the settle there. As I sat, another damsel came out and said to me, "O my lord, my mistress bids thee enter and sit down at the door of the saloon, to receive thy money." So I entered and sat down, nor had I sat a moment, before a curtain of silk was drawn aside and I saw the lady seated on a throne of gold, with the necklace about her neck, unveiled and showing a face as it were the round of the moon. At this sight, my wit was troubled and my mind confounded, by reason of her exceeding beauty and grace; but, when she saw me, she rose and coming up to me, said, "O light of mine eyes, is every handsome one like thee pitiless to his mistress?" "O my lady," answered I, "beauty, all of it, is in thee and is one of thine attributes." "O jeweller," rejoined she, "know that I love thee and can hardly credit that I have brought thee hither." Then she bent to me and I kissed her, and  
 Night taxi. she kissed me, and drawing me towards her, pressed me to her bosom. She knew by my case that I had a mind to enjoy her; so she said to me, "O my lord, dost thou

<sup>1</sup> Dies albo lapide notanda.

think to foregather with me unlawfully? By Allah, may he not live who would do the like of this sin and who takes pleasure in foul talk! I am a clean virgin, whom no man hath approached, nor am I unknown in the city. Knowest thou who I am?" "No, by Allah, O my lady!" replied I. Quoth she, "I am the lady Dunya, daughter of Yehya ben Khalid the Barmecide and sister of Jaafer, the Khalif's Vizier." When I heard this, I drew back from her, saying, "O my lady, it is no fault of mine if I have been over-bold with thee; it was thou didst encourage me to aspire to thy love, by giving me access to thee." "No harm shall befall thee," answered she; "and needs must thou attain thy desire in the way that is pleasing to God. I am my own mistress and the Cadi shall act as my guardian, in consenting to the marriage-contract; for it is my will that I be thy wife and thou my husband." Then she sent for the Cadi and the witnesses and busied herself with the necessary preparations. When they came, she said to them, "Mohammed Ali ben Ali the jeweller seeks me in marriage and hath given me the necklace to my dowry; and I accept and consent." So they drew up the contract of marriage between us; after which the servants brought the wine-service and the cups passed round, after the goodliest ordinance: and when the wine mounted to our heads, she ordered a damsel, a lute-player, to sing. So she took the lute and sang thereto the following verses:

**He comes and shows me, all in one, fawn, moon and sapling slight:**

Foul fall the heart for thought of him that watches not the night!

**A fair one, Allah had a mind t' extinguish from his cheek One ravishment,**  
and straight, instead, another sprang to light.

**Whenas my censors speak of him, I cavil at their word, Feigning as if**  
I did dislike the mention of the wight;

**Yea, and I hearken, when they speak of other than of him, Though for**  
the thought of him, nathelesse, I am consumed outright.

**Prophet of beauty, all in him 's a very miracle Of grace, and greatest of**  
them all his face's splendid sight.

The sable mole upon his cheek hath taken up its stead, Against the troubles of this life to ward his forehead bright.

The censors, of their ignorance, bid me forget ; but I From true-believer cannot turn an infidel forthright.

We were ravished by the sweet music she made and the beauty of the verses she sang and the other damsels went on to sing, one after another, till ten had done so ; when the lady Dunya took the lute and playing a lively measure, sang these verses :

By the softness of thy graceful-gaited shape I swear, For estrangement from thy presence the pangs of hell I bear.

Have pity on a heart that burns i' the hell-fire of thy love, O full moon in the darkness of the night that shinest fair !

Vouchsafe to me thy favours, and by the wine-cup's light To blazon forth thy beauties, henceforth, I'll never spare.

A rose hath ta'en me captive, whose colours varied are, Whose charms outvie the myrtle and make its thorns despair.

When she had finished, I took the lute and playing a quaint prelude, sang the following verses :

Glory to Him who gave thee all beauty in earth and skies So I'm become of thy bondsmen for ever and thy prize.

Thou that art gifted with glances that make mankind thy slaves, Pray we may come off scathless from the sorcery of thine eyes.

Two opposites, fire, incarnate in shining splendour of flame, And water, thy cheek uniteth, conjoined in wondrous wise.

How dulcet and yet how bitter thou art to my heart, alack ! To which thou at once and ever art Hell and Paradise !

When she heard this, she rejoiced with an exceeding joy ; then, dismissing her women, she brought me to a most goodly place, where they had spread us a bed of various colours. She did off her clothes and I had a **Night** lover's privacy of her and found her an unpierced pearl **xxxii.** and a filly no man had ridden. So I rejoiced in her and repeated the following verses :

Stay with us, Night, I prithee ! I want no morning-white ; The face of my beloved sufficeth me for light.

**I gave my love, for chin-band, my palm spread open wide And eke for  
ringdove's collar, my arms about him dight.**

**This is indeed th' attainment of fortune's topmost height ! We clip and  
clip and care not to stir from our delight.**

Never in my life knew I a more delightful night than this, and I abode with her a whole month, forsaking shop and home and family, till one day she said to me, "O light of my eyes, O my lord Mohammed, I have a mind to go to the bath to-day; so sit thou on this couch and budge not from thy place, till I return to thee." "I hear and obey," answered I, and she made me swear to this; after which she took her women and went off to the bath. But, by Allah, O my brothers, she had not reached the end of the street, when the door opened and in came an old woman, who said to me, "O my lord Mohammed, the lady Zubeideh bids thee to her, for she hath heard of thine elegance and accomplishments and skill in singing." "By Allah," answered I, "I will not rise from my place, till the lady Dunya come back." "O my lord," rejoined the old woman, "do not anger the lady Zubeideh with thee and make an enemy of her. Come, speak with her and return to thy place." So I rose and followed her into the presence of the princess, who said to me, "O light of the eye, art thou the lady Dunya's beloved?" "At thy service," answered I. Quoth she, "He spoke sooth who reported thee possessed of grace and beauty and good breeding and all good qualities; indeed, thou surpassest report; but now sing to me, that I may hear thee." "I hear and obey," answered I. So she brought me a lute, and I sang the following verses :

**The heart of the lover is weary with loving and striving in vain, And  
even as a spoil is his body in the hands of sickness and pain.**

**Who should there be, 'mongst the riders on camels with haltered head,  
Save a lover whose dear-belovéd the camel-litters contain !**



A moon, in your tents that rises, to Allah I commend, One my heart  
loves and tenders, shut in from the sight of her swain.

Anon she is kind, anon angry : how goodly her coquetry is ! For all  
that is done of a loved one must needs to her lover be fain.

When I had finished, she said to me, "God assain thy body and sweeten thy voice ! Verily, thou art perfect in beauty and good breeding and singing. But now rise and return to thy place, ere the lady Dunya come back, lest she find thee not and be wroth with thee." So I kissed the earth before her and the old woman forewent me to the door whence I came. I entered and going up to the couch, found that my wife had come back and was lying asleep there. So I sat down at her feet and rubbed them ; whereupon she opened her eyes and seeing me, drew up her feet and gave me a kick that threw me off the couch, saying, "O traitor, thou hast been false to thine oath and hast perjured thyself. Thou sworest to me that thou wouldst not stir from thy place ; yet didst thou break thy promise and go to the lady Zubeideh. By Allah, but that I fear scandal, I would pull down the palace over her head !" Then said she to her black slave, "Harkye, Sewab, arise and strike off this lying traitor's head, for we have no further need of him." So the slave came up to me and tearing a strip from his skirt, bound my eyes with it and would have cut off my  
**Night** head ; but all her women, great and small, came up to her  
**ccxciii.** and said to her, "O our lady, this is not the first who hath erred : indeed, he knew not thy humour and hath done nothing deserving of death." "By Allah," replied she, "I must needs set my mark on him." And she bade beat me ; so they beat me on my sides, and the marks ye saw are the scars of that beating. Then she bade them put me out, and they carried me to a distance from the house and cast me down. I rose and dragged myself little by little to my own house, where I sent for a surgeon, who dressed my wounds and comforted me. As soon as I was recovered

and my pains and sickness had left me, I went to the bath and thence betaking myself to my shop, sold all that was therein. With the proceeds, I bought four hundred white slaves, such as no king ever got together, and caused two hundred of them ride out with me every day. Then I made me yonder barge, on which I spent five thousand dinars, and styled myself Khalif and appointed each of my servants to the charge and clad him in the habit of some one of the Khalif's officers. Moreover, I let cry abroad, "Whoso goeth a-pleasuring on the Tigris [by night], I will strike off his head without mercy;" and on this wise have I done this whole year past, during which time I have heard no news of the lady neither happened upon any trace of her.' And he wept copiously and repeated the following verses:

By Allah, I will never all my life long forget her, my dear; And those  
only will I tender, who shall bring her to me to draw near.  
Now glory to her Maker and Creator be given evermore! As the full  
moon in the heavens, in her aspect and her gait she doth appear.  
She, indeed, hath made me weariful and wakeful, full of sorrow, sick  
for love; Yea, my heart is all confounded at her beauty, dazed for  
trouble and for fear.

When Er Reshid heard the young man's story and knew the passion and transport and love-longing that afflicted him, he was moved to compassion and wonder and said, 'Glory be to God who hath appointed to every thing a cause!' Then they craved the young man's leave to depart; which being granted, they took leave of him, the Khalif purposing to do him justice and entreat him with the utmost munificence, and returned to the palace of the Khalifate, where they changed their clothes for others befitting their station and sat down, whilst Mesrour stood before them. After awhile, the Khalif said to Jaafer, 'O Night Vizier bring me the young man with whom we were last night.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Jaafer, and going to

the youth, saluted him, saying, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' So he returned with him to the palace, in great concern by reason of the summons, and going in to the Khalif, kissed the earth before him. Then said he, 'Peace be on thee, O Commander of the Faithful and Protector of the people of the Faith!' And offered up a prayer for the endurance of his glory and prosperity, for the accomplishment of his desires and the continuance of his bounty and the cessation of evil and punishment, ordering his speech as best he might and ending by repeating the following verses:

Still may thy threshold as a place of adoration<sup>1</sup> Be sought and on men's  
brows its dust bespeak prostration,  
That so in every land be made this proclamation, "Thou, thou art  
Abraham and this his very station."<sup>2</sup>

The Khalif smiled in his face and returned his salute, looking on him with the eye of favour. Then he bade him draw near and sit down before him and said to him, 'O Mohammed Ali, I wish thee to tell me what befell thee last night, for it was rare and passing strange.' 'Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful!' replied the youth. 'Give me the handkerchief of immunity, that my trouble may be appeased and my heart set at rest.' Quoth the Khalif, 'Thou art safe from fear and trouble.' So the young man told him his story from first to last, whereby the Khalif knew him to be a lover and severed from his beloved and said to him, 'Wilt thou that I restore her to thee?' 'This were of the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful,' answered the youth and repeated the following verses:

<sup>1</sup> Lit. *Kaabeh*.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the station in the Temple of Mecca, known as the *Mecam* or standing-place of Abraham. The wish inferred is that the Khalif's court may be as favourite a place of reverent resort as the station in question.

Kiss thou his finger-tips, for no mere fingers they, But keys to all the goods by God to men assigned;  
And praise his deeds no less, for no mere deeds are they, But jewels to adorn the necks of humankind.

Thereupon the Khalif turned to Jaafer and said to him, 'Bring me thy sister the lady Dunya.' 'I hear and obey,' answered he and fetched her forthright. When she stood before the Khalif, he said to her, 'Dost thou know who this is?' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' answered she, 'how should women have knowledge of men?' The Khalif smiled and said, 'O Dunya, this is thy beloved, Mohammed ben Ali the jeweller. We are acquainted with his case, for we have heard the whole story, from beginning to end, and apprehended its inward and its outward; and it is no more hidden, for all it was kept secret.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' rejoined she, 'this was written in the book of destiny. I crave the forgiveness of the Most High God for that which I have done and beseech thee to pardon me of thy favour.' At this the Khalif laughed and summoning the Cadi and the witnesses, renewed the marriage-contract between Dunya and her husband, whereby there betided them the utmost of felicity and those who envied them were mortified. Moreover, he made Mohammed Ali one of his boon-companions, and they abode in joy and cheer and gladness, till there came to them the Destroyer of Delights and the Sunderer of Companies.

#### ALI THE PERSIAN'S STORY OF THE KURD SHARPER.

The Khalif Haroun er Reshid, being more than commonly restless one night, sent for his Vizier and said to him, 'O Jaafer, I am sore wakeful and heavy at heart to-night, and I desire of thee what may cheer my spirit and ease me of my oppression.' 'O Commander of the



Faithful,' answered Jaafer, 'I have a friend, by name Ali the Persian, who hath store of tales and pleasant stories, such as lighten the heart and do away care.' 'Fetch him to me,' said the Khalif. 'I hear and obey,' replied Jaafer and going out from before him, sent for Ali the Persian and said to him, 'The Commander of the Faithful calls for thee.' 'I hear and obey,' answered Ali and followed the Vizier into the presence of the Khalif, who bade him be seated and said to him, 'O Ali, my heart is heavy within me this night and I hear that thou hast great store of tales and anecdotes; so I desire of thee that thou let me hear what will relieve my oppression and gladden my melancholy.' 'O Commander of the Faithful,' said he, 'shall I tell thee what I have seen with my eyes or what I have heard with my ears?' 'An thou have seen aught [worth telling],' replied the Khalif, 'let me hear that.' 'Know then, O Commander of the Faithful,' said Ali, 'that some years ago I left this my native city of Baghdad on a journey, having with me a boy who carried a light wallet. Presently, we came to a certain city, where, as I was buying and selling, a rascally thief of a Kurd fell on me and seized my wallet, saying, "This is my bag, and all that is in it is my property." Thereupon, "Ho, Muslims all," cried I, "deliver me from the hand of the vilest of oppressors!" But they all said, "Come, both of you, to the Cadi and submit yourselves to his judgment." I agreed to this and we both presented ourselves before the Cadi, who said, "What brings you hither and what is your case?" Quoth I, "We are men at difference, who appeal to thee and submit ourselves to thy judgment." "Which of you is the complainant?" asked the Cadi. So the Kurd came forward and said, "God preserve our lord the Cadi! Verily, this bag is my bag and all that is in it is my property. It was lost from me and I found it with this man." "When didst thou lose it?" asked the

Cadi. "But yesterday," replied the Kurd; "and I passed a sleepless night by reason of its loss." "If it be thy bag," said the Cadi, "tell me what is in it." Quoth the Kurd, "There were in my bag two silver styles and eye-powders and a handkerchief, and I had laid therein two gilt cups and two candlesticks. Moreover it contained two tents and two platters and two hooks and a cushion and two leather rugs and two ewers and a brass tray and two basins and a cooking-pot and two water-jars and a ladle and a sacking-needle and a she-cat and two bitches<sup>1</sup> and a wooden trencher and two sacks and two saddles and a gown and two fur pelisses and a cow and two calves and a she-goat and two sheep and an ewe and two lambs and two green pavilions and a camel and two she-camels and a she-buffalo and two bulls and a lioness and two lions and a she-bear and two foxes and a mattress and two couches and an upper chamber and two saloons and a portico and two ante-rooms and a kitchen with two doors and a company of Kurds who will testify that the bag is mine." Then said the Cadi to me, "And thou, what sayst thou?" So I came forward, O Commander of the Faithful (and indeed the Kurd's speech had bewildered me) and said, "God advance our lord the Cadi! There was nothing in this my wallet, save a little ruined house and another without a door and a dog-kennel and a boys' school and youths playing dice and tents and tent-poles and the cities of Bassora and Baghdad and the palace of Sheddad ben Aad<sup>2</sup> and a smith's forge and a fishing net and cudgels and pickets and girls and boys and a thousand pimps, who will testify that the bag is my bag." When the Kurd heard my words, he wept and wailed and said, "O my lord the Cadi, my bag is known and what is in it is renowned; therein are castles and citadels and cranes and beasts of prey and men playing chess and draughts. Moreover, in this my bag is a

<sup>1</sup> Or (*quare*) a pair of forceps.

<sup>2</sup> See *anté*, p. 335.

brood-mare and two colts and a stallion and two blood-horses and two long lances and a lion and two hares and a city and two villages and a courtesan and two sharking pimps and a catamite and two gallows-birds and a blind man and two dogs and a cripple and two lameters and a priest and two deacons and a patriarch and two monks and a Cadi and two assessors, who will testify that the bag is my bag." Quoth the Cadi to me, "And what sayst thou, O Ali?" So, O Commander of the Faithful, being filled with rage, I came forward and said, "God keep our lord ~~ccxvii~~ the Cadi! I had in this my wallet a coat of mail and a broadsword and armouries and a thousand fighting rams and a sheep-fold and a thousand barking dogs and gardens and vines and flowers and sweet herbs and figs and apples and pictures and statues and flagons and goblets and fair-faced slave-girls and singing-women and marriage-feasts and tumult and clamour and great tracts of land and brothers of success<sup>1</sup> and a company of daybreak-raiders, with swords and spears and bows and arrows, and true friends and dear ones and intimates and comrades and men imprisoned for punishment and cup-companions and a drum and flutes and flags and banners and boys and girls and brides, in all their wedding bravery, and singing-girls and five Abyssinian women and three Hindi and four women of Medina and a score of Greek girls and half a hundred Turkish and threescore and ten Persian girls and fourscore Kurd and fourscore and ten Georgian women and Tigris and Euphrates and a fowling net and a flint and steel and Many-Columned Irem<sup>2</sup> and a thousand rogues and pimps and horse-courses and stables and mosques and baths and a builder and a carpenter and a plank and a nail and a black slave, with a pair of recorders, and a captain and a caravan-leader and towns and cities and a hundred

<sup>1</sup> i.e. thieves.

<sup>2</sup> See *ant*, p. 337.

thousand dinars and Cufa and Ambar<sup>1</sup> and twenty chests full of stuffs and twenty store-houses for victual and Gaza and Askalon and from Damietta to Essouan and the palace of Kisra Anoushirwan<sup>2</sup> and the kingdom of Solomon and from Wadi Numan<sup>3</sup> to the land of Khorassan and Balkh and Ispahan and from India to the Soudan. Therein also (may God prolong the life of our lord the Cadi!) are doublets and cloths and a thousand sharp razors to shave the Cadi's chin, except he fear my resentment and adjudge the bag to be mine."

When the Cadi heard what I and the Kurd avouched, he was confounded and said, "I see ye are none other than two pestilent atheistical fellows, who make sport of Cadis and magistrates and stand not in fear of reproach. Never did any tell or hear tell of aught more extraordinary than that which ye pretend. By Allah, from China to Shejreh umm Ghailan,<sup>4</sup> nor from Fars to the Soudan, nor from Wadi Numan to Khorassan, was ever heard or credited the like of what ye avouch! Is this bag a bottomless sea or the Day of Resurrection, that shall gather together the just and unjust?" Then he bade open the bag; so I opened it and behold, there was in it bread and a lemon and cheese and olives. So I threw it down before the Kurd and went away.'

When the Khalif heard Ali's story, he laughed till he fell backward and made him a handsome present.

<sup>1</sup> A city on the Euphrates, about 40 miles west of Baghdad.

<sup>2</sup> The famous King of Persia.

<sup>3</sup> In Arabia.

<sup>4</sup> *Lit.* "a thorn-acacia tree." *Quere*, the name of a town of Egypt?



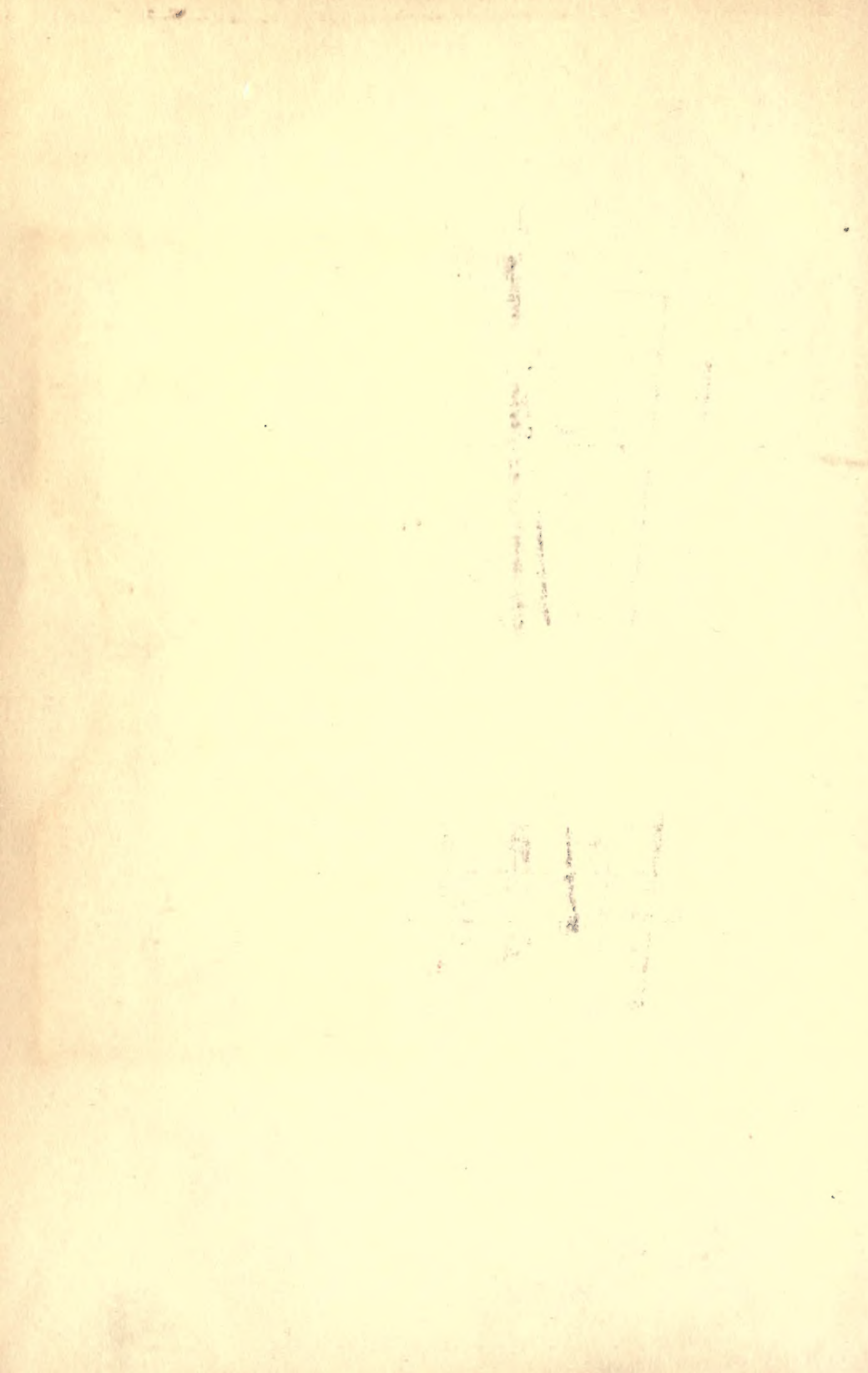












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